Hafa Adai!

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Rota offers only journalism class in CNMI. PAGE 3
Public warned against dangerous jellyfish. PAGE 5

$1

Finance chief Atalig resigns

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Finance Secretary David Atalig has officially tendered his resignation from his post as finance chief as a courtesy to the incoming administration.

According to his resignation letter addressed to Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, Atalig officially renounced

See ATALIG on Page 4

Extreme cold, travel chaos: Woes from deadly storm continue

By CAROLYN THOMPSON and JAKE BLEIBERG
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP)—The deep freeze from a deadly winter storm that walloped much of the United States will continue into the week as people in western New York deal with massive snow drifts that snarled emergency vehicles and travelers across the country see cancelled flights and dangerous roads.

See COLD on Page 4

RELATED NEWS

- Frigid monster storm across US claims at least 34 lives. **PAGE 12**
- Heavy snow in Japan leaves 17 dead, dozens injured. **PAGE 13**

In this drone image, snow blankets a neighborhood, Sunday, Dec. 25, 2022, in Cheektowaga, N.Y. Millions of people hunkered down against a deep freeze Sunday morning to ride out the frigid storm that has killed at least 24 people across the United States and is expected to claim more lives after trapping some residents inside houses with heaping snow drifts and knocking out power to several hundred thousand homes and businesses.
JOHN WALLER VIA AP

ROTA WORKSHOP
KUAM chief CNMI correspondent Thomas Manglona makes a presentation during the Northern Marianas Humanities Council's Minagahet-Ellet: Reporting the Truth in the NMI Workshop last Thursday at the Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Jr./Sr. High School cafeteria on Rota.
MARK RABAGO

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Over $1M in BOOST funds used for marketing

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

The House of Representatives joint committee that is looking into the Building Optimism, Opportunities, and Stability Together, or BOOST, program officially made public last week some of the documents they've acquired from the program's administrator, Bank of Saipan and, according to those documents, over

See BOOST on Page 4

Kilili: Permanent fix to Marianas Medicaid passes

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The federal government will permanently cover 83% of the cost of Medicaid in the Marianas under terms of the fiscal year 2023 spending deal passed by the U.S. Senate on Thursday and the House of Representatives on Friday. The bill now awaits President Joe Biden's signature to

See KILILI on Page 4

INSIDE

BUSINESS
Juan Pan Guerrero has followed the breadcrumbs to Rota where he has opened a general store.

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NATION
Millions are riding out a winter storm that has killed at least 34 people across the United States.

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LIFE & STYLE
"Avatar: The Way of Water" sailed to the top of the box office in its second weekend.

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SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

Taga Riders association donates to CHC pediatric ward

From left, pediatric registered nurse Haram Lee, nurse manager Jeannet Muyalde, admin specialist Kelly Maligsa, public information officer Lee Tenorio, and chief of Ancillary Services Jesse Tudela. Taga Riders Motorcycle Club donated toys and book to the pediatric unit of the Commonwealth Health Center just in time for Christmas last Friday. LEIGH GASES

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

For the 28th year in a row, the motorcyclist group Taga Riders has donated toys and children's books once more to the pediatric unit of the Commonwealth Health Center.

The Taga Riders Motorcycle Club, a stateside group founded by George and Terry Camacho in 1994, continued their spirit of giving just in time for Christmas Eve last Friday.

The donation was received by pediatric registered nurse Haram Lee, nurse manager Jeannet Muyalde, administrative specialist Kelly Maligsa, public information officer Lee Tenorio, and chief of Ancillary Services Jesse Tudela.

"The holidays are here once again. This will be our 28 years of doing acts of kindness in giving to communities such as CHC and many other groups since we established in 1994. So, once again, we are back and we wish everyone at CHC a great, wonderful *Hafa Adai* and a merry, merry Christmas and a great new year from all of us—your local Taga Riders Forever Motorcycle Club. Enjoy!" said George and Terry Camacho.

"I'd like to thank the Taga Riders for their continuing donation…that will definitely go to the kids who are hospitalized here at the Pediatric Ward currently, and even future patients that will come," said Tudela. "We are very grateful for the donation. It will bring high spirit to the kids who are hospitalized and hopefully they can also improve their reading by the time they get to a school age. It's a very good gesture and the timing is right…"

"The holidays are all about giving. And we should also remember to spend time with loved ones. And… the pediatric patient will be spending their time with their loved ones in the hospital, so having something to get their mind off of what they're going through—the pain or suffering—is very much appreciated. So thank you very much to the Taga Riders for the donations," added Tudela.

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Rota offers only journalism class in CNMI

By MARK RABAGO
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Associate Editor

SONGSONG, Rota—Former Pacific News Center reporter Jocelyn Atalig is almost singlehandedly trying to revive interest in learning journalism in the Commonwealth.

The Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Jr./Sr. High School teacher is in her second year teaching a journalism elective, which currently stands as the only journalism class in the CNMI and that includes Saipan and Tinian.

Through *Jungle Journals*, Atalig and her students report about what's happening in their small community that becomes more critical since the major media companies on Saipan report little to no news about Rota.

"It's kind of a struggle here, but there are a lot of stories and nobody's reporting on anything. There are a lot of stories that my students are able to cover. The most recent I think and the one that I'm most proud of is their coverage [of] the elections. They interviewed our...mayor[-elect], our first female youngest mayor of Rota. They also interviewed our senators and [representatives], like all the people that you know, all the candidates that ran this year."

While *Jungle Journals* isn't printed yet, Atalig said she plans to publish the articles online soon.

"It's kind of difficult for us because my students transition out every year. So it's like I'm retraining and retraining. My first year, I got like 20 students and then seven this year."

She believes the journalism class and last week's Minagahet-Ellet: Reporting the Truth in the NMI Workshop by the Northern Marianas Humanities Council gave her students other career options.

"It's great exposure for the students because, you know, being here on Rota we don't really have a personal attachment to [news] like if we have our own Rota news company. So, being kind of detached from *Saipan Tribune*, KUAM, or media on Saipan and media [in] Guam, I guess it showed them a different career path as opposed to the things that they will usually pursue coming from Rota."

One of Atalig's students, Abriette Manglona, said the journalism class has so far been an eyeopener.

"It's been a good experience. I was never introduced to journalism. I know it's like oh, that's the news that was a mystery to me a lot. Like I never knew what an inverted pyramid was. I didn't know what beats were and I'm thinking like music."

Manglona said she learned about the journalism class through her former classmates.

"I heard a lot about it from my classmates and my peers saying it's so fun. …So I just decided to give it a shot. And I wouldn't say I'm super interested, but it sparked an interest and who knows maybe I'll explore that later when I graduate."

On the Minagahet-Ellet: Reporting the Truth in the NMI Workshop and presentation that dealt with the results of a survey on the CNMI's news media, Manglona said it was the most engagement she's seen from her classmates.

MARK RABAGO/{BR}/ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Jr./Sr. High School teacher Jocelyn Atalig and her journalism class pose with presenters of the Minagahet Ellet survey prepared by the Northern Marianas Humanities Council last Thursday.

"I was really interested. I mean, you don't really see that in presentations when people come from off-island. A lot of the students don't really pay attention but in this presentation, I noticed that a lot of people were or a lot of the students were really engaged and they were really interested."

What piqued their curiosity the most, she thinks, was that one of the presenters was KUAM reporter Thomas Manglona, who is an alumnus of Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Jr./Sr. High School.

Humanities Council program coordinator Naomi Tudela said the Minagahet-Ellet: Reporting the Truth in the NMI Workshop concluded the events aligned with the Democracy and the Informed Citizen program.

"It essentially aimed to raise media literacy in our communities and support our local journalists by allowing them to engage one another through a community survey, forums, and workshops such as this one for the students on Rota. With these interactive events, we get to connect people and explore the role of the humanities in creating a more informed citizenry and a stronger democracy," she said.

As the only school in the CNMI that offers a class on journalism, Tudela said it was an honor to coordinate the workshop for Atalig's class.

"They were able meet their local journalists who shared their stories, answered the students' questions, and taught them about good reporting. Hopefully this event will spark an interest in a journalism career one day. The students at RHI were incredible, engaged, and truly impressive."

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COLD

From Page 1

The massive storm has killed at least 34 people across the United States and is expected to claim more lives after trapping some residents inside houses and knocking out power to tens of thousands of homes and businesses.

The extreme weather stretched from the Great Lakes near Canada to the Rio Grande along the border with Mexico. About 60% of the U.S. population faced some sort of winter weather advisory or warning, and temperatures plummeted drastically below normal from east of the Rocky Mountains to the Appalachians.

The National Weather Service said Sunday the frigid arctic air "enveloping much of the eastern half of the U.S. will be slow to moderate."

That's especially unwelcome news for Buffalo, which saw hurricane-force winds and snow causing white-out conditions that paralyzed emergency response efforts.

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul said almost every fire truck in the city was stranded Saturday and implored people Sunday to respect an ongoing driving ban in the region. Officials said the airport would be shut through Tuesday morning. The National Weather Service said the snow total at the Buffalo Niagara International Airport stood at 43 inches (109 centimeters) at 7 a.m. Sunday.

Huge snowdrifts nearly covered cars and there were thousands of houses, some adorned in unlit holiday displays, dark from a lack of power.

With snow swirling down untouched and impassable streets, forecasters warned an additional 1 to 2 feet (30 to 60 centimeters) of snow was possible in some areas through early Monday morning amid wind gusts of 40 mph (64 kph). Police said Sunday evening that there were two "isolated" instances of looting during the storm.

Two people died in their suburban Cheektowaga, New York, homes Friday when emergency crews could not reach them in time to treat their medical conditions. Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz said 10 more people died there during the storm, including six in Buffalo, and warned there may be more dead.

DEREK GEE/THE BUFFALO NEWS VIA AP

A giant tree lays across the intersection of West Delavan Avenue and Bidwell Parkway in Buffalo, N.Y. on Saturday, Dec. 24, 2022.

"Some were found in cars, some were found on the street in snowbanks," Poloncarz said. "We know there are people who have been stuck in cars for more than 2 days."

Freezing conditions and power outages had Buffalonians scrambling to get to anywhere with heat amid what Hochul called the longest sustained blizzard conditions ever in the city. But with streets under a thick blanket of white, that wasn't an option for people like Jeremy Manahan, who charged his phone in his parked car after almost 29 hours without electricity.

"There's one warming shelter, but that would be too far for me to get to. I can't drive, obviously, because I'm stuck," Manahan said. "And you can't be outside for more than 10 minutes without getting frostbit."

Ditjak Ilunga of Gaithersburg, Maryland, was on his way to visit relatives in Hamilton, Ontario, for Christmas with his daughters Friday when their SUV was trapped in Buffalo. Unable to get help, they spent hours with the engine running, buffeted by wind and nearly buried in snow.

By 4 a.m. Saturday, their fuel nearly gone, Ilunga made a desperate choice to risk the howling storm to reach a nearby shelter. He carried 6-year-old Destiny on his back while 16-year-old Cindy clutched their Pomeranian puppy, following his footprints through drifts.

"If I stay in this car I'm going to die here with my kids," Ilunga recalled thinking. He cried when the family walked through the shelter doors. "It's something I will never forget in my life."

Travelers' weather woes continued, with hundreds of flight cancellations already and more expected after a bomb cyclone—when atmospheric pressure drops very quickly in a strong storm—developed near the Great Lakes, stirring up blizzard conditions, including heavy winds and snow.

The storm knocked out power in communities from Maine to Seattle. But heat and lights were steadily being restored across the U.S. According to poweroutage.us, less than 200,000 customers were without power Sunday at 3 p.m. EDT—down from a peak of 1.7 million.

Concerns about rolling blackouts across eastern states subsided Sunday after PJM Interconnection said its utilities could meet the day's peak electricity demand. The mid-Atlantic grid operator had called for its 65 million consumers to conserve energy amid the freeze Saturday.

Storm-related deaths were reported in recent days all over the country: 12 in Erie County, New York, ranging in age from 26 to 93 years old, and another in Niagara County where a 27-year-old man was overcome by carbon monoxide after snow blocked his furnace; 10 in Ohio, including an electrocuted utility worker and those killed in multiple car crashes; six motorists killed in crashes in Missouri, Kansas and Kentucky; a Vermont woman struck by a falling branch; an apparently homeless man found amid Colorado's subzero temperatures; and a woman who fell through Wisconsin river ice.

KILILI

From Page 1

become law.

The 83% federal share for Marianas Medicaid is the highest for any state or territory and has been in place on a temporary basis since 2019. Without the extension in Friday's fiscal 2023 spending bill the federal share would drop to 55%, requiring the Commonwealth to spend an additional $40 million to completely draw down available federal funds.

Sablan

"This is very good news for everyone in our islands and the result of many years of work," said Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP).

"I am especially grateful to Medicaid director Helen Sablan, who made such a strong case for increasing federal funding and lowering the local share of costs at the hearing on insular area Medicaid that I held in 2019.

"Her advocacy at the hearing and impeccable administration of the program in the Marianas helped pass U.S. Public Law 116-94 three years ago, raising funding to $60 million with an annual inflation adjuster. And Helen has continued to consult with congressional staff in the lead up to this week's success."

When Sablan first took office in 2009, the Commonwealth received just $5 million each year from the federal government for Medicaid and had to match that money dollar-for-dollar. Sablan was able to get $109 million funding for the Marianas and an improved matching rate in the 2010 Affordable Care Act, Obamacare. When those funds were used up, he added another $36 million for Marianas Medicaid with a floor amendment to the 2019 disaster bill, U.S. Public Law 116-20.

Then, with passage of P.L. 116-94 he raised the funding floor to $60 million with annual increases based on the medical care component of the consumer price index. By fiscal 2022 funding reached $64 million. Fiscal 2023 is expected to top $66 million for the Marianas.

Sablan also used P.L. 116-94 to lower the required local match. The Commonwealth's share dropped from 45% to 17% with the federal government picking up the other 83%. But the change was only temporary, a problem Friday's legislation fixes.

The Senate passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 by a vote of 68-29. The House voted 225-201 for passage. The White House has already said that Biden will sign the legislation. ***(PR)***

BOOST

From Page 1

$1 million in grant funding was used to pay for marketing.

Soon after Finance Secretary David Atalig asked last week for more time before testifying about his involvement in the BOOST program, the joint committee went ahead and officially entered into the record over 10 pages of BOOST-related documents acquired from BOS.

Among these documents were lists of grant recipients, grant applicants, the exact amounts requested and awarded to these businesses, and expenditures to include external marketing contracts.

According to these documents, the biggest contracts for marketing went to Nonstop Corp. and Roil Soil, with each one billing the government over $300,000 for marketing services.

These documents also showed that a whopping $18,000 of BOOST funds were used to fund mixer events.

Prior to the publication of the BOOST program documents, BOS president and CEO John Arroyo testified about these external BOOST contracts used for marketing. He told members of the joint committee that BOS received an initial $340,000 administrative fee, which was partially used to pay for marketing contracts with Nonstop Corp. to endorse the BOOST grant program. The first contract initially encompassed marketing strategies but it later included event planning, coordination, and public outreach.

However, Arroyo shared that the administrative fee was not enough to fund the second and third contracts because the contracts exceeded the $50,000 budget allocated from their administrative fee.

After discussing this with Finance Secretary David Atalig, Arroyo said the finance chief instructed him to send him invoices for these contracts and he would authorize payments using BOOST grant funds.

"When I talked to the secretary of Finance and told him the bank couldn't afford to pay for a second contract with all the additional expenses from our administrative fee, he said [Finance] would go ahead and pay the additional marketing expenses from the BOOST funds. He said, 'Just email me and send me those invoices' and he would approve payment with authorization to withdraw from the BOOST funds," he said.

One of the most controversial invoices made public by the Legislature was an invoice for Nonstop Corp. in the amount of over $33,000 for travel, lodging, meals, and a corkage fee.

Arroyo also testified about other contracts paid through BOOST grant funds, which included Roil Soil and Fit To Lead. However, he claims BOS didn't contract these agencies.

"We didn't really contract with these people. They just all of a sudden came on board. We would just receive invoices and I'd send those invoices over to the secretary of Finance," Arroyo said.

ATALIG

From Page 1

his role as finance chief effective Dec. 16.

Atalig told *Saipan Tribune* that he tendered his courtesy resignation in advance as he is leaving the islands.

"Since I had planned off-island trips which will limit my availability, I felt it would be better to advance my courtesy resignation for the next administration," he said.

In his resignation letter, Atalig said that he will be going off-island for medical treatment.

"With a heavy heart and utmost respect to you for your progressive leadership and compassion for our people, I am hereby tendering my courtesy resignation effective Dec. 16. In addition, I will be going off-island on Dec. 12, for medical treatment for both myself and my wife, therefore, my last working day will be Dec. 9," he said.

The former finance chief said in his resignation letter that his work under the Torres administration has been both gratifying and edifying.

"In all my years working for both the public and private sectors here and abroad I can honestly declare without any hesitation whatsoever that my brief stint working for you under your steadfast leadership has been most gratifying and edifying. Your commitment to a better quality of life, your compassion for lifting people up, and your enduring love for your people will forever be embedded in my memory for years to come. I know of no other leader and colleague who exemplifies time and time again his or her dedication and commitment to these islands and people than you," Atalig said.

In closing, Atalig said he is grateful for the chance he was given to serve as the CNMI's finance secretary in the last few years.

"I am forever indebted for the opportunity to serve alongside your admirable leadership in your administration," he said.

Although he has now left his post, Atalig still faces a subpoena from a House of Representatives joint committee that has questions for him relating to his involvement in the Torres administration's Building Optimism, Opportunities, and Stability Together, or BOOST, grant program.

Atalig, who was essentially in charge of managing federal funds allocated to the CNMI under the American Rescue Plan Act and Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act funding that funded the BOOST program, is accused of using his role to expedite the awarding process for businesses owned by members of his family.

The Legislature has granted him numerous extensions to testify before the committees. Rep. Celine Babauta (D-Saipan), who chairs one of the committees, has assured that Atalig will still be required to provide responses to their questions.

Public warned of high surf, rip current, dangerous jellyfish

The public is being warned that a dangerous form of jellyfish called Indo-Pacific men-o-war are expected through late Tuesday night. Contact with Indo-Pacific men-o-war, alive or dead, can cause extreme pain and may be fatal in some cases.

Also, a high surf advisory remains in effect until 4am tomorrow, Wednesday. There is also a high risk of rip currents through late tonight, Tuesday.

A small craft advisory is in effect until 6am Friday.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam, and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center - State Warning Point, large breaking waves of 9 to 11 feet and dangerous rip currents are present in west and north facing reefs of the Marianas.

Indo-Pacific men-o-war are expected in all beaches and surf zones of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

These factors will create dangerous swimming and surfing conditions and localized beach erosion. Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water.

A northwest swell is expected to maintain hazardous surf and a high rip current risk along west and north facing reefs of the Marianas. Men-o-war have been reported washed up on various beaches along west, north and east facing reefs. They are less likely along south facing beaches but may still be found in the water.

Inexperienced swimmers should remain out of the water due to dangerous surf conditions.

The public is advised to stay out of the water along north and west facing reef lines. Swim near a lifeguard. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Don't swim against the current. If able, swim in a direction following the shoreline. If unable to escape, face the shore and call or wave for help.

Remain out of the water to avoid hazardous swimming conditions. Even if men- o-war are not found along the beach, they could still be out in the water. Avoid making contact with men-o-war that have washed up on beaches, especially when bubbles can be seen.

Northeast winds of 15 to 25 knots, with gusts up to 30 knots and seas of 8 to 11 feet are expected in Marianas coastal waters until 6am Friday. Conditions will be hazardous to small craft.

A long period northwest swell will bring hazardous seas through Tuesday night, mainly for Tinian and Saipan coastal waters. Building northeast to east swell and breezy winds will bring hazardous seas for all coastal waters of the Marianas Wednesday through at least Thursday night.

A small craft advisory means that wind speeds of 21 to 33 knots are expected to produce wave conditions hazardous to small craft. Inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, should avoid boating in hazardous conditions. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Avoid making contact with Indo-Pacific men-o-war that have washed up on beaches. Contact with Indo-Pacific men-o-war, alive or dead, can cause extreme pain and may be fatal in some cases.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

4.8-magnitude quake in Pagan region

At 9:18am on Dec. 26 2022, a report of a 4.8-magnitude earthquake occurred in the Pagan region of the Northern Mariana Islands. Currently, no tsunami warnings or advisories were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 237-8000. ***(PR)***

5.0-magnitude quake in Pagan region

At 4:04pm on Dec. 25, 2022, a report of a 5.0-magnitude earthquake occurred in the Pagan region of the Northern Mariana Islands. Currently, no tsunami warnings or advisories were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 237-8000. ***(PR)***

Holiday hours at Koblerville Community Center

The Koblerville COVID-19 Community Center will have the following holiday hours:

■ Jan. 1, 2023: Testing – Closed (New Year's Day)

Office Hours – Closed (New Year's Day)

■ Jan. 2, 2023: Testing – 8am to 11am (In observance of New Year's Day)

Office Hours– 8am to 12pm (In observance of New Year's Day)

The Travel Test team can be reached at (670) 785-9966 or (670) 287-7570. ***(PR)***

CNMI Weightlifting Competition set

To all weightlifters and persons interested in weightlifting, the CNMI Weightlifting Competition will be held on Saturday, Jan. 7, 2023, at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium in Susupe, Saipan.

There will be no entry fee for members of CNMI Weightlifting and a $20 entry fee for non-members.

Entry forms may be obtained from Jeanne Rayphand at the Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems Inc. office in Gualo Rai, Saipan. Entries must be received by Rayphand on or before Dec. 31, 2022. ***(PR)***

NMC campuses closed until Jan. 2, 2023

Northern Marianas College campuses on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota is closed until Jan. 2, 2023. Offices will reopen on Tuesday, Jan. 3, 2023.

Ongoing students, however, can continue to register for classes by accessing their ProaPortal accounts and new students can register for classes if they have contacted their adviser for academic advising. Students will also be able to make changes to their schedule during "add and drop" week on Jan. 17 - 21, 2023, but course selection may be limited during this period.

More information about NMC's spring 2023 Semester can be found on www.marianas.edu.

For urgent matters, community members are asked to email nmc@marianas.edu.

For campus emergencies, contact NMC security at 237-6800. ***(NMC)***

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IT&E

‘Terrifying’: Air passenger recounts crashing into ceiling

HONOLULU (AP)—Tiffany Reyes had just gotten back to her seat from the bathroom and was about to buckle her safety belt when Hawaiian Airlines Flight 35 dipped.

In an instant, Reyes found herself on the aisle floor, staring up at caved-in ceiling panels and a cracked bathroom sign that was hanging.

“I asked everyone around me, ‘Was that me?” Reyes said in an interview Monday. “They said I had apparently flown into the ceiling and slammed into the ground.”

Reyes, 40, was among 20 people on the flight—passengers and crew—taken to hospitals after turbulence struck their plane flying from Phoenix to Honolulu without warning Sunday.

Eleven people were in serious condition. In all, 36 people received medical treatment for bumps, bruises, cuts and nausea, said Jim Ireland, director of Honolulu Emergency Medical Services.

Reyes was heading home after picking up her daughter Kaylee from college. She initially thought something had hit the plane and that it was crashing. She briefly thought they were going to die because she had never encountered anything so violent on a flight before.

“That’s the most terrifying experience I’ve been through in my whole 40 years of life,” Reyes said.

Reyes wasn’t bleeding. And the adrenaline surging through her dulled the pain that would eventually come. She crawled back into her seat. And her daughter, who was buckled up and escaped injury, “just held me the whole time.”

Others had it much worse, Reyes said. She saw a woman walk off the plane with gashes in her head and blood on her face and clothes.

An ambulance took Reyes to an emergency room where she received X-rays, had her blood taken and various other screenings. After five hours there, she and her family – her daughter, son and husband – went home to decompress.

She had a headache which began to fade Sunday night. But the left side of her body started to ache.

“I can’t even move around in bed,” Reyes said. “So I have to sleep right on my back without even moving.”

The National Transportation Safety Board said Monday it is investigating the incident.

The full flight had nearly 300 people aboard and carried many passengers traveling to Hawaii for the holidays, like Jacie Hayata Ano, who was heading home.

“It was just rocky,” she told KHON-TV. “And then, it quickly just escalated to the point where we’re shaking so much that we were pretty much like floating off of our chairs.”

> That’s the most terrifying experience I’ve been through in my whole 40 years of life.

Hawaiian Airlines Chief Operating Officer Jon Snook said such turbulence is isolated and unusual, noting the airline had not experienced anything like it in recent history. Three flight attendants were among the injured, he said.

Jazmin Bitanga, who was also traveling home for the holidays, said there were two drops in altitude, including one that was so strong it sent her boyfriend’s water bottle into the plane’s ceiling.

“Just all around me, there were people crying,” she told Hawaii News Now.

There was some internal damage to the aircraft during the turbulence, Snook said. The fasten-seat belts sign was on at the time, though some of those injured were not wearing them, he said.

The airline was aware of the forecast for thunderstorms and unstable air and weather conditions, but had no warning that the particular patch of air where the turbulence occurred “was in any way dangerous,” Snook said.

He did not know how much altitude the plane lost during the turbulence, saying that would be part of an investigation involving the National Transportation Safety Board. The plane’s flight data recorder would provide those details, he said.

The investigation would also address precisely what the passengers and crew were doing at the time, he said.

The Airbus A330-200 began its descent immediately after the turbulence, Snook said. The crew declared an emergency because of the number of injuries on board and air traffic controllers gave the flight priority to land.

The aircraft will undergo a thorough inspection and maintenance, mostly to fix components in the cabin, Snook said.

Snook said he could only speculate whether some passengers hit their heads, but that was likely based on the injuries and the damage to cabin paneling.

“If you don’t have your seat belt on, you stay where you are as the aircraft goes down, and that’s how those injuries occur,” Snook said.

The investigation will examine what other measures were taken, aside from turning on the fasten seat belt sign, to ensure passengers were buckled in, he said.

A high wind warning and flood watch were in effect Monday for Hawaii as a strong front moves across the islands, according to the National Weather Service.

On Monday, severe turbulence hit a United Airlines flight traveling from Rio de Janeiro to Houston. The airline said two passengers and three crew members suffered “minor injuries” and were taken to a hospital shortly after the flight landed at George Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston. The airline did not describe the nature of the injuries.

A 2021 NTSB report on preventing turbulence-related injuries on scheduled passenger flights said wearing a seat belt reduces the risk of serious injury. It also found that air traffic control procedures for processing pilot weather reports were “time-consuming and nonstandardized.” The report said that air carriers often share observations about turbulence with their own personnel, but not throughout the national airspace system.

In 2019, 37 passengers and flight crew members were injured when an Air Canada flight from Vancouver to Sydney hit intense turbulence about two hours past Hawaii. The Boeing 777-200 was diverted to Honolulu, where the injured received treatment. Thirty people were taken to hospitals and nine had serious injuries.

Most people associate turbulence with heavy storms. But the most dangerous type is so-called clear-air turbulence. The windshear phenomenon can occur in wispy cirrus clouds or even clear air near thunderstorms, as differences in temperature and pressure create powerful currents of fast-moving air.

Planes can sail into clear-air turbulence without warning.

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

REQUEST FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES
CUC-RAESP-23-004

A&E Design Services for Tinian Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Collection System & Rota Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Collection System Preliminary Engineering Report

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified Architectural and Engineering (A&E) firms for Preliminary Engineering Reports (PER) for a Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Collection System on Tinian and Rota. The services shall include preparation of the PER as per USDA RUS Bulletin 1780-2.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States Office of Insular Affairs, U.S. Department of Interior.

Prospective Proposers for this project must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division via email to marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org. The RAESP package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office via email after registration.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the Proposal and One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of the Cost Proposal in a separate envelope must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **“CUC-RAESP-23-004, A&E Services for Tinian Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Collection System & Rota Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Collection System – Preliminary Engineering Report”,** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 a.m., (ChST) on January 18, 2023. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.**

Discussions may be conducted with responsible proposers who submit proposal determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from the proposal submitted by competing proposers.

All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposers due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Consultant’s preparation of a proposal under the contract. The RAESP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the statement of qualifications under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Consultants are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RAESP and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 28, 2022** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Ms. Nicolette Villagomez, CUC Water/Wastewater, Engineer – via email, nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org; Larry Manacop, CUC Acting Chief Engineer at email larry.manacop@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, Administrative Technician Senior – via email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and waive any imperfection in the proposal in the best interest of the government. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INVITATION FOR BID
CUC-IFB-23-012

Carbon Change Out of Granular Activated Carbon Filters (10 Sites)

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for Carbon Change Out of Granular Activated Carbon Filters (10 Sites) in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The intent of the contract is for the Contractor to provide all labor, equipment, supplies, and materials necessary for the removal and installation of GAC and Gravel media replacement, disposal of spent GAC and Gravel media, possible sample collection, transportation, and the possible supply of gravel media, analyses of spent media, and additional waste containers/drums for disposal, if necessary. CUC requires the Project to be completed in 180 calendar days from date of award of contract.

The project is funded by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of **$200.00** (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **December 28, 2022 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked “**CUC-IFB-23-012, Carbon Change Out of Granular Activated Carbon Filters (10 Sites)”** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 17, 2023,** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier’s check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the Unites States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. A Payment Bond of One Hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers’ questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI’s Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI’s Insurance Code.

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor’s preparation of a bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 a.m. (ChST) on January 4, 2023** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Nicolette Villagomez, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer via email address nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org and to Christie Sablan, P&S, Senior Administrative Technician – christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

New law ends COVID-19 vaccine mandate for US troops

WASHINGTON (AP)— U.S. military forces around the world will no longer be required to get the COVID-19 vaccine, after the mandate was lifted under an $858 billion defense spending bill passed by Congress and signed into law Friday by President Joe Biden.

The department has 30 days to work out the details for rescinding the mandate. The Pentagon said Friday that in the meantime the military services would pause any personnel actions, such as discharging troops who refused the shot, and all troops would still be encouraged to get vaccinated and boosted.

Biden had opposed the Republican-backed provision, agreeing with Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin that lifting the mandate was not in the best interests of the military, according to White House officials. But he ultimately accepted GOP demands in order to win passage of the legislation.

The contentious political issue, which has divided America, forced more than 8,400 troops out of the military for refusing to obey a lawful order when they declined to get the vaccine. Thousands of others have sought religious and medical exemptions.

U.S. MARINE CORPS/LANCE CPL. BRANDON AULTMAN

U.S. Navy seaman Isaiah Miller, hospital corpsman, 1st Battalion, 3d Marines, prepares a needle with the COVID-19 vaccine, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Feb. 18, 2021.

The new law effectively ends those exemption requests, but questions remain about whether any limited restrictions may continue for troops on specific missions or assigned to areas of the world where vaccination is still required.

Austin, who instituted the mandate last August after the Pfizer vaccine was approved by the Food and Drug Administration and as the coronavirus pandemic raged, was staunch in his desire to maintain it insisting the vaccine was necessary to protect the health of the force. And he and other defense leaders argued that for decades troops, particularly those deployed overseas, have been required to get as many as 17 different vaccines. No other vaccine mandates were affected by the new law.

But Congress agreed to rescind the mandate, with opponents reluctantly saying that perhaps it had already succeeded in getting the bulk of the force vaccinated. Roughly 99% of active-duty troops in the Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps had gotten the vaccine, and 98% of the Army. The Guard and Reserve rates are lower, but generally are more than 90%.

After signing the defense bill on Friday, Biden said in a statement that certain provisions "raise concerns," but overall it "provides vital benefits and enhances access to justice for military personnel and their families, and includes critical authorities to support our country's national defense, foreign affairs, and homeland security."

The bill includes about $45 billion more for defense programs than Biden had requested and roughly 10% more than last year's bill as lawmakers looked to account for inflation and boost the nation's military competitiveness with China and Russia. It includes a 4.6% pay raise for servicemembers and the Defense Department's civilian workforce.

According to U.S. officials, the department will take at least some of the next 30 days to work out the details of rescinding the vaccine mandate and decide what specific orders will come from Austin and what, if any, flexibility he will leave to service secretaries and chiefs.

Defense officials familiar with the ongoing discussions said there have been high-level meetings on the issue with some spirited discussions, and that service leaders have made it clear that they want clear, specific guidance and for everyone to implement the new directive the same way.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations, said the department is reviewing legal and medical advice as they figure out how to mitigate any potential health risks in military missions.

Austin, however, could leave some decisions to the services -- including whether they can require vaccines in some circumstances, such as certain deployments overseas. In recent public comments, Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro suggested that rescinding the vaccine mandate could divide the service into two classes of people: those who can deploy and those who can't.

Military officials vividly recall the overwhelming crisis of the USS Theodore Roosevelt, the Navy aircraft carrier that was knocked out of duty and sidelined in Guam for 10 weeks in early 2020 as the emerging virus swept through the ship. More than 1,000 crew members eventually became infected, and one sailor died.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INVITATION FOR BID
CUC-IFB-23-003

SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF MEDIUM-DUTY BOOM TRUCK VEHICLE

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the supply and delivery of a medium-duty boom truck for the Power Plant in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked ***"CUC-IFB-23-003, Supply and Delivery of a Medium Duty Boom Truck"*** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on January 4, 2023** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before the due date and time or post-marked before the submission deadline. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification should be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid or supply under the contract. The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the bid under this request, or to procure or contract for goods. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on December 19, 2022,** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC's Purchasing Administrator, via email manny.sablan@cucgov.org with copies to Jubal Slayer, CUC's Technical Manager for Oil via email at jubal.slayer@cucgov.org and Christie L. Sablan, CUC's Senior Administrative Technician at christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in the said bids, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids submitted shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-23-009

SUPPLY & DELIVERY OF POWER DISTRIBUTION ANNUAL MATERIALS

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified vendors for the Supply and Delivery of Power Distribution Annual Materials for Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.
CUC may award a contract to more than one firm for the materials, based on bids for "Commodity Groups".

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-IFB-23-009, Supply & Delivery of Power Distribution Annual Materials, Saipan, CNMI" to CUC Procurement & Supply Division, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Dandan, Saipan MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 a.m. (ChST) on January 19, 2023**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. An electronic copy of the entire submission is also required to be sent via email to CUC Procurement & Supply Division via email address, marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

A *Bid Guarantee* of not less than fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations. All responses to this Invitation for Bids should take into account any and all taxes, including excise tax, which will become the obligation of the bidder, awarded a contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (C1hST) on December 29, 2022** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Marcela Tenorio, CUC Senior Purchasing Technician via email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org; Joseph Crisostomo, CUC Power Division Purchasing Technician via email joseph.crisostomo@cucgov.org and Alfred Palattao, Jr., CUC Power Division Engineer via email alfred.palattao@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in said bid proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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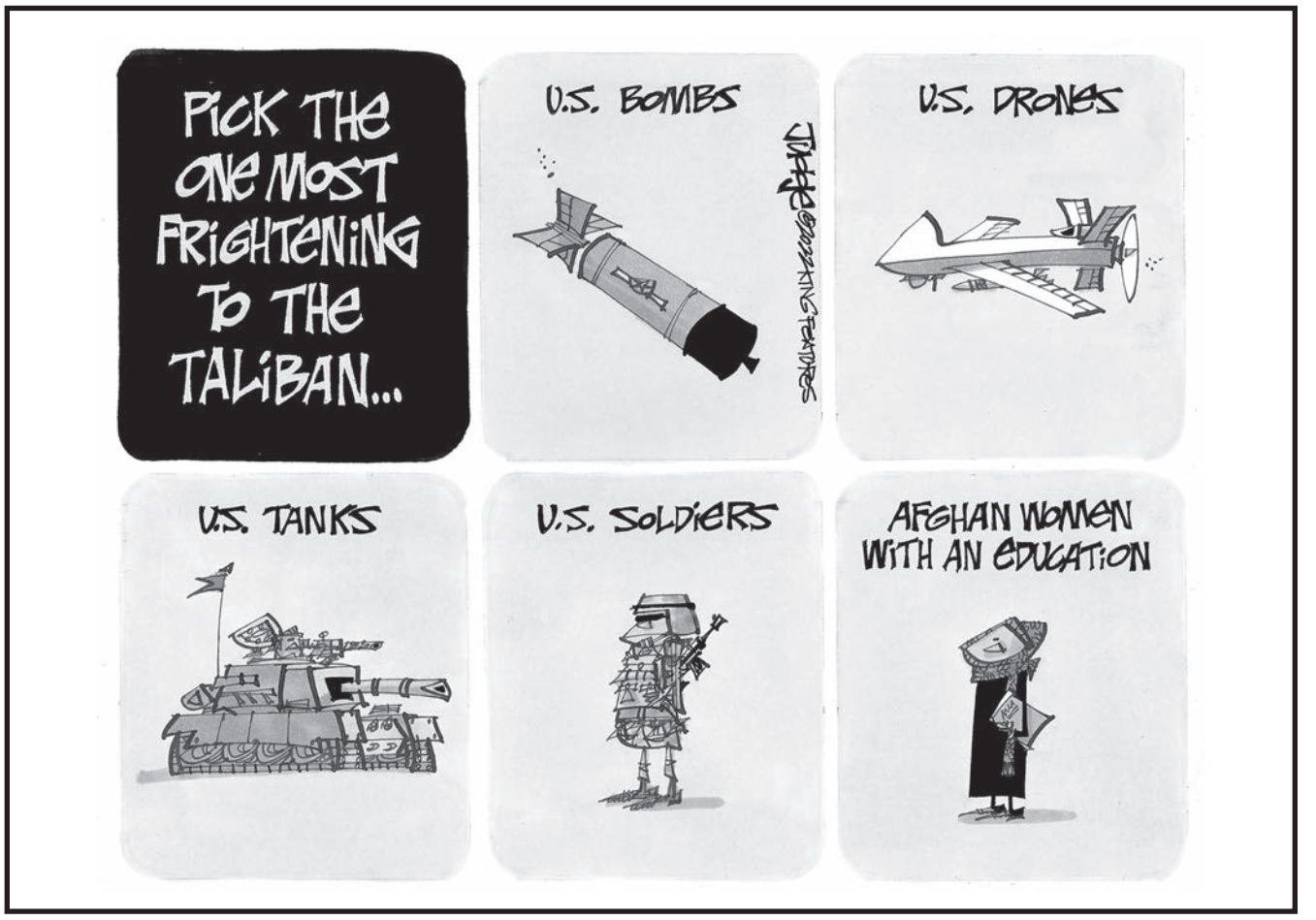

EDITORIAL

The best gift you can give your loved ones? A COVID-free holiday season

The best gift you can give your loved ones this year? A COVID-free holiday season.

By all indications, getting infected with COVID has ceased to be a frightening prospect for most. Few people wear a mask in public. Proof of vaccination is rarely required to visit most establishments. And the share of people who have received the latest booster shot is just 14%, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

But COVID-19 is still a very real threat with hundreds of people in the United States dying every day, most of them over the age of 65. In other words, our grandmas and abuelitas.

Let's keep them safe by taking COVID-19 precautions seriously. Considering it's our third winter since the pandemic began, we should be pros at using the tools we have to avoid turning our holiday gatherings into superspreader events.

It may seem as though it's safe to gather in large numbers with family and friends in warm, cozy homes for holiday celebrations. But it's prime COVID season, along with influenza and other deadly respiratory diseases. Past winter surges of coronavirus were tied directly to holiday gatherings and travel.

Public health experts warn that the risk remains for serious illness, hospitalization and death from an infection as well as long COVID, where symptoms persist for months and years. Those at higher risk for serious illness include people who are older, have disabilities such as cerebral palsy or underlying medical conditions such cancer, kidney disease and cystic fibrosis. People of color who live or work in denser, high-risk areas and may have limited access to medical care are also at high risk for serious illness.

In Los Angeles County, the mortality rate due to COVID-19 is highest for those living in areas of high poverty and for Latinos. The mortality rate for Latinos—475 deaths per 1,000 people—is more than double that of white people.

Even those who are not part of the above groups can easily transmit the virus, even if asymptomatic, in the first few days of an infection. Who wants to be responsible for passing on the virus to older relatives or those with weakened immune systems who may be less able to fend off serious illness?

And it's so easy to avoid. Face masks, rapid tests and booster shots are available in local pharmacies, and the Biden administration once again is sending out at-home COVID-19 tests at no charge. And in a pinch, gatherings can move outdoors or to well-ventilated areas.

It's disappointing that we are facing another COVID-19 Christmas this Sunday—and another new year in which the pandemic persists. But by now, we know how to keep one another safe.

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'Heart of the Marianas'

By CANDICE MUÑA
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

What began as a spark of inspiration one afternoon during my 4th-period class grew into one of the greatest learning experiences for my students and me. On Thursday, Dec. 15, 2022, over a hundred U.S. Government & Economics students from Marianas High School visited the Governor's Office and Legislature, both the House of Representatives and the Senate. Our mission was to visit both the Executive and Legislative branches and learn firsthand from our elected officials about the important work of running our Commonwealth government.

When we met Gov. Ralph Torres in his conference room, he greeted us and welcomed us to take a seat at his table. My students were feeling shy, but once settled, he briefly introduced himself and talked about how he got started in his 15-year political career. He brought up Article 12 of the CNMI Constitution, which limits the permanent and long-term land acquisition of fixed property to those of Northern Marianas descent. He asked students their thoughts about it, then explained the importance of protecting and preserving the land because it is one of our natural resources that cannot grow. He gave examples of a few Pacific nations' approaches to land rights and ownership, then provided various solutions for any of Article 12's disadvantages. Then we proceeded to an open forum where students could ask him any questions they had. A few of my students' questions resembled those asked in the gubernatorial debate. However, many questions were on various topics that the students care about, such as public services, infrastructure, economy, public parks, his career accomplishments, and challenges, as well as controversial issues. Gov. Torres took his time to answer every question as best as he could, even the ones that were controversial and that students felt too shy to ask. For questions about public services and projects, he provided clear and concise information and timelines. He was very helpful, open, and frank. Finally, Gov. Torres shared some advice that helped him succeed as the youngest governor in the United States and Commonwealth history: "Follow your passion in life and don't let anyone stop you from doing it." He also stressed the importance of establishing a positive support system to help the youth succeed: "Surround yourself with positive people and include your family on your journey."

After the forum, we all took a group photo with the governor while a couple students in our school's video production class were given a tour of the media room. Finally, staffers gave everyone a red lunch bag filled with a donut, egg sandwich, chicken *kelaguen* wrap, and water. This meant a lot to me as a field trip coordinator because I was concerned about any thirsty and hungry students. Acts of kindness such as this show a person's heart and Gov. Torres was kind, hospitable, and generous to all of us. By the end of our meeting, my students' faces were full of smiles as they shook hands and took selfies with the Governor before heading out the door.

On the short walk to the Legislature, my students walked with a bounce in their steps, full of excitement and appreciation. The truth is that after all these years of conflict, controversy, and criticism within our government, in our community, and in the media, these young people finally found a sense of clarity and understanding because they had the opportunity to ask questions, listen, and learn Gov. Torres's perspectives directly from him. These perspectives were unfiltered from third-party perspectives. Gov. Torres was head-of-state for nearly half of their lives, so it was very important for them to find closure at the end of his administration. Finally meeting him and learning firsthand about his work and contributions to our Commonwealth was a great relief for the youth because they were able to form a more accurate and open-minded perception of him.

Continued on Next Page

Continued from Page 8

As we entered the House of Representatives, House Speaker Edmund Villagomez warmly welcomed us and gave an introduction to the meeting that was taking place. Students were interested to witness our elected officials hard at work amending the Whistleblower Protection Act. Rep. Celina Babauta welcomed us, announcing our visit and informing us of the work that their committee was doing. Rep. Tina Sablan was passionately focused on the task at hand, providing amendments to the legal counsel. After some time, Youth Congress coordinator Luis Castro arrived to escort us to the Senate where there was a meeting in session regarding pensions. Earlier that morning, Senate President Jude Hofschneider welcomed the first group of students to the Senate chamber where he and Sen. Vinnie Sablan, Sen. Karl King-Nabors, and Se. Justo Quitugua gave an informative talk and answered any questions the students had. A few of those questions were related to Article 12, the districts of the CNMI, and various aspects of the tourism economy. All students were very engaged and intrigued by their new mentors who they had followed in the news for the past year and more.

After observing the Senate meeting, we made our way back to the House of Representatives chamber during recess, where we had the opportunity to meet and take photos with our representatives: House Vice Speaker B.J. Attao and Reps. Celina Babauta, Sablan, Donald Manglona, Edwin Propst, Vicente Camacho, and Richard Lizama. Students took photos with Sablan, whose gubernatorial campaign inspired young women to consider a career in politics. After greeting our representatives and taking photos, we bid farewell and began to board our buses to depart for our school campus.

After meeting with our elected officials, it was apparent that they are all very dedicated and hardworking people who do their best for our Commonwealth. My students and I all feel a sense of gratitude that, despite their differences, they all took time from their busy schedules to educate and inspire our youth. During a class discussion after the field trip, one of my students said, "There are two sides to every story. It's nice to know Gov. Torres' perspective." This student was one of two students whom I sent to the Close Up Youth Summit earlier this semester. At this weeklong summit, both young women successfully conducted research, drafted, debated, and passed a legislative proposal with the guidance of Sablan, the 2022 Democrat gubernatorial candidate. Another student reflected, "The most precious lesson that I learned was never to let anyone stop me from pursuing what I desire. The amount of criticism directed at Gov. Torres was a lot; however, he taught us to never give up. With this experience, I became more open-minded about the government."

In one class discussion, my students brainstormed the top qualities that make good leaders: 1) *Open-mindedness* to understand others' perspectives without judgment, 2) *Empathy* to understand others' life experiences and to treat them with kindness and respect, and 3) *Compassion* to show mercy, grace, and charity to others. Furthermore, my students also listed the following traits as hallmarks of a good leader and positive role model for their generation: loving, honest, loyal, understanding, accepting, positive, values equality, friendly, selfless, determined, demonstrates a good example, uplifts the human spirit, and respectful. When I asked my students who their role models are, many mentioned family, peers, personal connections, and social media influences. With all that is happening and continues to occur in our Commonwealth, my students have expressed that they are having trouble finding good role models. One student said, "We can find them if we look hard enough." However, I believe our youth should not have to look hard to find good role models.

As a mother, teacher, advocate, and citizen, I am writing this letter from the depths and sincerity of my heart, with the unanimous agreement, support, and consent of my students. This letter is a call for all of us to open our hearts so that we may transcend contempt and resentment toward forgiveness and unconditional love. Our youth are observing all that is occurring in our Commonwealth and they yearn for reconciliation, peace, compromise, cooperation, stability, positivity, and progress. They desire respect, acceptance, and inclusion, regardless of a person's background, beliefs, political party, or past. We need a change, but the change we truly desire will not come from a change of officials who sit in political office or transferring of power from one party to another. Elected officials will always change and unenlightened people will always battle over money and power. Our history has shown that this cycle is not the solution for the repeating cycle of dysfunction. The change we need to make is within each and every one of our hearts. There exists good in all, just as there is a shadow, and the way we see our world is colored by our perceptions. In order to find the truth, we must keep an open mind and an open heart to rise above clouded judgments. We must be compassionate so we can live in the spirit of *inafa'maolek*, which means making things right with harm to none. As the dawn of the New Year is upon us, I pray we can all find it in our hearts to learn the lessons of the past, forgive ourselves and each other and move forward together in peace and unity. And when I say "unity," I truly mean "all of us" because we are all One. *Uno Hit*!

In closing, I would like to share a personal memory with all of you. About a year ago, someone told me, "The future of the Marianas lies within your heart." Since that time, these words have had a profound impact on me. I did not understand what this person saw in me. How could the future of the Marianas lie within my heart? I am one person who has gone through many struggles in life, just like many of you. Although time has passed, I never forgot these words. However, as I was writing this letter, I realized the deeper meaning of these words. I realize my greatest power is the infinite wealth of love and harmony within my heart that I can share with others. Now, it is my turn to pass on these profound words to each and every one of you because you, too, have great potential and hold the key to our future.

"The future of the Marianas lies within your heart."

May we move forward with *guinaiya yan hinengge*—love and faith—for a better and brighter tomorrow. I wish you all a warm "*Felis Pasgua & Añu Nuebu*," full of love, happiness, and peace. *Sen dangkalu na Si Yu'us Ma'åse yan Ghilissow ngelúgh* for reading this letter with an open mind and heart.

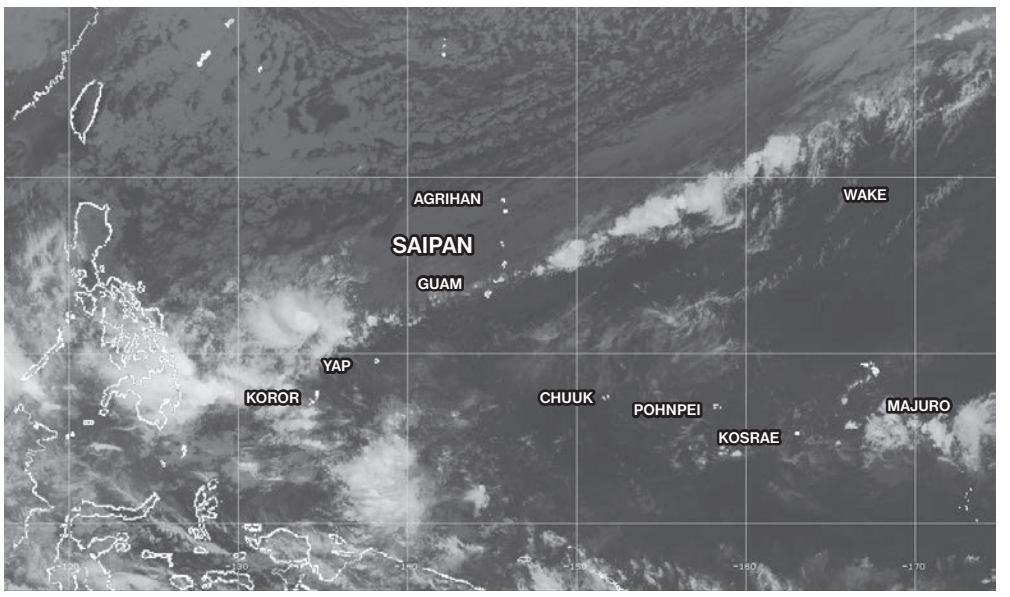
Candice Muña is a teacher at Marianas High School.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Scattered showers and thunderstorms. Partly sunny	Mostly sunny	Mostly sunny	Mostly sunny	Mostly sunny
85º 75º	85º 75º	85º 75º	85º 75º	85º 75º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:58 AM, MONDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2022

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Guam Doppler radar shows a band of showers just north of Rota which is the leading edge of a shear line dropping to the south. Otherwise, the Marianas Waters contain mostly cloudy skies for Tinian and Saipan and partly cloudy skies for Guam and Rota, with isolated showers. More showers are expected to start coming through Tinian and Saipan. The buoys reveal combined seas of 7 to 9 feet, composed mostly of a large northwest swell.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°
Palau	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°
Yap	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°
Chuuk	Cloudy	86° / 80°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	84° / 78°
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	87° / 78°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:40 AM	5:54 PM
Wednesday	6:41 AM	5:55 PM
Thursday	6:41 AM	5:55 PM
Friday	6:42 AM	5:56 PM
Saturday	6:42 AM	5:57 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	9:39 AM	9:04 PM	-
Wednesday	10:39 AM	10:09 PM	-
Thursday	11:32 AM	11:12 PM	-
Friday	12:19 PM	-	-
Saturday	-	12:46 AM	12:56 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	73° / 63°
Beijing	Mostly Cloudy	30° / 18°
Hong Kong	Cloudy	66° / 64°
Honolulu	Showers	81° / 71°
London	Showers	39° / 34°
Los Angeles	Sunny	82° / 51°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	88° / 75°
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	82° / 59°
Miami	Sunny	70° / 55°
New York	Mostly Sunny	44° / 35°
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	48° / 39°
Paris	Showers	43° / 34°
Busan	Mostly Sunny	50° / 43°
Rome	Rain	59° / 50°
Salem	Sunny	56° / 38°
San Francisco	Sunny	64° / 46°
Seoul	Sunny	27° / 14°
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	46° / 34°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	46° / 34°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
4:29 AM	Low Tide	-0.75
11:49 AM	High Tide	1.80
5:20 PM	Low Tide	1.08
9:50 PM	High Tide	1.68

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2022

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	6:00AM	7:45AM	Daily
UA193	7:55PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	8:00PM	9:50PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau
OZ624/701	3:40PM	10:35AM+1	3,6 via Incheon

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

OZ624	3:40PM	7:40PM	3, 6
TW308	4:30PM	8:20PM	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

BX621	3:10PM	6:30PM	3, 7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:46AM	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
UA184	12:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA189/174	12:40AM	8:46AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
UA184/174	10:55PM	8:46AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
UA192/174	10:40PM	8:46AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
OZ704/623	11:50PM	2:40PM+1	2, 5 via Incheon

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ623	9:00AM	2:40PM	3, 6
TW307	10:00AM	3:30PM	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

BX622	8:00AM	1:10PM	3, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

MARIANAS SOUTHERN AIRWAYS

INITIAL DAILY FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF AUGUST 18, 2022

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
7:00 A.M.	7:15 A.M.	(Except Sundays)
9:50 A.M.	10:05 A.M.	
4:00 P.M.	4:15 P.M.	(Except Saturdays)

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
7:35 A.M.	7:50 A.M.	(Except Sundays)
10:25 A.M.	10:40 A.M.	
4:35 P.M.	4:50 P.M.	(Except Saturdays)

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
8:10 A.M.	8:40 A.M.	
1:45 P.M.	2:15 P.M.	

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
9:00 A.M.	9:30 A.M.	
2:35 P.M.	3:05 P.M.	

SAIPAN TO GUAM

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
11:10 A.M.	12:00 P.M.	
5:15 P.M.	6:05 P.M.	

GUAM TO SAIPAN

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
12:30 P.M.	1:20 P.M.	
6:40 P.M.	7:30 P.M.	

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

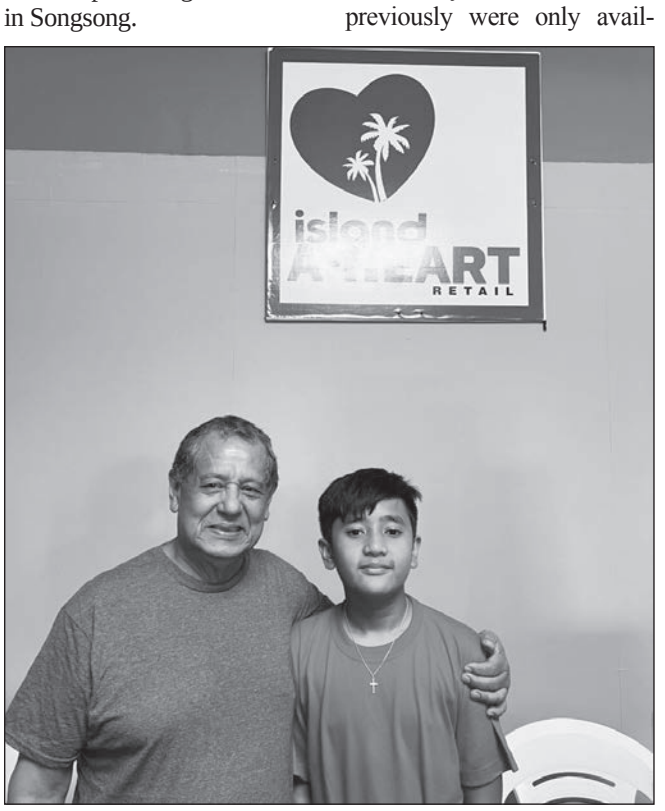
Business

Juan Pan moves to Rota, opens general store

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
Associate Editor

SONGSONG, Rota—Juan Pan Guerrero has followed the bread crumbs to Rota where he has opened a general store in Songsong.

The former lawmaker and former president of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce said he and his wife opened Island A-Heart Retail three months ago so the people of Rota can finally have items that previously were only available during shopping trips to Saipan.



MARK RABAGO
Island A-Heart Retail co-owner Juan Pan Guerrero poses with his son, Andre Heart.

MARK RABAGO
Island A-Heart Retail is located in Songsong Village across Puesto Grill on Rota.

"There's a lot of challenges and things to do. We hit a few snags along the way. I'm hoping that we can influence some of the changes that are good for the people and the community. Here, they really need a lot of help as the prices of goods are two to three times higher than Saipan or Guam. On Saipan we take a lot of things for granted that we have all the stores. Here, you want to buy some stuff, it's not available or you need to wait for weeks to see them back on the shelves," he said.

Case in point was when a military personnel visited the island and forgot to pack underwear.

"Tommy Mendiola was making a joke when this military guy from Guam came over. They were at the Rota Mayor's Office and the guy forgot to bring underwear. So the guy says, 'Where can I buy underwear?' 'We don't wear underwear,' Tommy said jokingly, suggesting that nobody on Rota actually wears underwear," said Guerrero.

Fortunately, with the entry of Island A-Heart, military personnel—or any tourist for that matter who forgot to bring their tighty whities—can be assured that they can buy underwear on Rota, as Guerrero's store has a large clothing selection for men, women, and children on island.

As the former president and general manager of Herman's Modern Bakery, Guerrero is confident he can meet the retail needs of the people of Rota.

"It's very challenging because it's a very small community but this is where you use your skills. And of course I've been doing business for many years. So, we ask customers what they want. Yesterday we had a customer who needed blueberries. So, I called Saipan and asked if they could include those in our shipment and the blueberries came. We sell a number of items that normally you don't find on Rota."

As for the name of the store, Guerrero said Island A-Heart is named after his son, Andre Heart Guerrero, and the building where it stands used to be owned by the Taimanao family and was the biggest grocery store on Rota.

Aside from doing business in a small market, Guerrero said his biggest adjustment moving to Rota has been missing friends and family on Saipan.

"I don't see my [grandchildren] as much but fortunately we have a chat group and I can reach out to my grandkids on a daily basis."

On the side, Guerrero and his construction company have been helping with the renovation of the Valentino Hotel and other work to bring buildings up to standard and in compliance.

"What made us stay on Rota and open this store is that helping people is key. ...Providing them goods and services is also a matter of importance for us. Seeing young toddlers with their parents touching and crying because they want a particular toy, I really feel for that. I can say proudly that we have the largest shoe selection on island and also we represent Herman's Modern Bakery," said Guerrero.

In his advice to future entrepreneurs on Rota, Guerrero said you have to be extraordinarily committed to your business.

"Especially on Rota you have to be hands-on. You can't just hire a manager. You have to be committed. You have to have a vision on what you want to sell. It's trial-and-error here, full of ups and downs."

He admits, though, that not all the items they've bought since opening Island A-Heart have been hits and sold, but Guerrero has a nifty trick to still make them useful.

"I can donate to the church, the schools, and I can also donate to the Medical Referrals because here it's not enough to just sell tickets. We always try to participate in our own way, big or small," he said.

Island A-Heart Retail is located in Songsong Village across Puesto Grill on Rota. For more information, call (670) 483-6277 or go to Islands A-Heart's Facebook page.

Spending bill aids retirees, and boosts financial industry

WASHINGTON (AP)—A section of the $1.7 trillion spending bill passed Friday has been billed as a dramatic step toward shoring up retirement accounts of millions of U.S. workers. But the real windfall may go to a far more secure group: the financial services industry.

The retirement savings measure labeled Secure 2.0 would reset how people enroll in retirement plans — from requiring them to opt into plans, to requiring them to opt out. The provision is designed to ensure greater participation.

It also allows workers to use their student loan payments as a substitute for their contributions to their retirement plans — meaning they can get matching retirement contributions from their employers by paying off that debt — increases the age for required distributions from plans, and expands a tax-deductible saver's credit.

But as with so many far-reaching spending bills that get little public consideration, provisions of the legislation also benefit corporate interests with a strong financial interest in the outcome.

"Some of these provisions are good and we want to help people who want to save — but this is a huge boon to the financial services industry," says Monique Morrissey an economist at the liberal Economic Policy Institute in Washington. Some parts of the bill, she says, are "disguised as savings incentives."

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

ESTATE OF JUAN DIEGO CAMACHO BLANCO, Deceased.	:	Civil Action NO. 22-0005 ORDER REGARDING PUBLICATION AND SETTING STATUS CONFERENCE

Administratrix's filed her Motion for Order Setting Time to Hear Claims of Heirship and Deadline for Filing Claims of Heirship on December 15, 2022.

Any heirship claim shall be filed on before February 28, 2023. A copy of this Order shall be published at least two times in two papers of general circulation in the Proof of service of the publication shall be filed with the Court.

A copy of this Order shall also be served on all the known heirs. Proof of service shall also be filed with the Court.

The Court sets a **Status Conference on March 16, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. in Courtroom 220A**. All parties are ordered to appear.

IT IS SO ORDERED this 22nd day of

/s/
JOSEPH N. CAMACHO, Associate Judge

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
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PO BOX 501055•SAIPAN•MP•96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
WEBSITE: WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS FOR CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT SERVICES
BENJAMIN TAISACAN MANGLONA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AIRCRAFT PARKING APRON REHABILITATION
AIP 3-69-0003-34/XX

The Commonwealth Ports Authority's (CPA) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, CPA hereby seeks the services of qualified consulting firms to provide Construction Management Services for the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport Aircraft Parking Apron Rehabilitation Project, AIP 3-69-0003-34/XX.

The project is being funded by U.S. Federal Aviation Administration in accordance with CPA's Procurement Rules and Regulations, Section 40-50-202, Architect-Engineer Design and Construction Management Services.

The Request for Qualification (RFQ) Package is available at CPA's Administration Office, 2nd floor of the arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. No fee is required for obtaining the RFQ package. Electronic copies may be made available upon written request to Ms. Wendi Prater at wprater@cnmiports.com or Ms. Sheri Llagas at receptionist@cnmiports.com.

Questions regarding this request for qualification statements must be submitted in writing to Ms. Wendi L. Prater, CPA Executive Assistant/Project Manager, via email to wprater@cnmiports.com or hand delivered to the CPA Administration Office by no later than 5:00 p.m. CHST, local time, Friday, December 16, 2022.

The statements of professional qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria available in the RFQ package.

Interested Consultants are requested to submit one (1) original, four (4) copies and one (1) electronic version in .pdf of their statements of professional qualifications no later than **5:00 p.m. CHST, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2022**. Statements of qualification must be presented by a combination of both brochures and the use of current U.S. Government Standard Form 330.

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualification for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest

/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Date: November 22, 2022

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
BOARD OF PAROLE
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TO ALL MEDIA SERVICES PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

MESSAGE: The Honorable Governor Ralph Dlg. Torres and Honorable Lt. Arnold I. Palacios, through the CNMI Board of Parole Office, and pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section II of the "Open Government Act of 1992," hereby give "Official Notice" that a **Preliminary Hearing** is scheduled for **December 29, 2022 (Thursday) at 9:00 am** at the CNMI Board of Parole Office building 1216, located at Capitol Hill, Saipan MP 96950. The following individual (s) will appear before the Hearing Examiner

Parolee

1. Eugene Blas Repeki Cr. Cs. #: 00-0162B B.O.P #: 09-010

Should you have any further inquiries, or need any additional information, please contact the CNMI Board of Parole Office at telephone number (670) 664-3300.

/s/ Lucinda R. Selepeo
Acting Chairwoman
CNMI Board of Parole

12/22/2022
Date

Nation

Frigid monster storm across US claims at least 34 lives

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — Millions of people hunkered down against a deep freeze Sunday to ride out the winter storm that has killed at least 34 people across the United States and is expected to claim more lives after trapping some residents inside houses with heaping snow drifts and knocking out power to tens of thousands of homes and businesses.

The scope of the storm has been nearly unprecedented, stretching from the Great Lakes near Canada to the Rio Grande along the border with Mexico. About 60% of the U.S. population faced some sort of winter weather advisory or warning, and temperatures plummeted drastically below normal from east of the Rocky Mountains to the Appalachians, the National Weather Service said.

Travelers' weather woes are likely to continue, with hundreds of flight cancellations already and more expected after a bomb cyclone — when atmospheric pressure drops very quickly in a strong storm — developed near the Great Lakes, stirring up blizzard conditions, including heavy winds and snow. Some 1,707 domestic and international flights were canceled on Sunday as of about 2 p.m. EDT, according to the tracking site FlightAware.

The storm unleashed its full fury on Buffalo, with hurricane-force winds and snow causing whiteout conditions, paralyzing emergency response efforts. New York Gov. Kathy Hochul said almost every fire truck in the city was stranded Saturday and implored people Sunday to respect an ongoing driving ban in the region. Officials said the airport would be shut through Tuesday morning. The National Weather Service said the snow total at the Buffalo Niagara International Airport stood at 43 inches (109 centimeters) at 7 a.m. Sunday.

Daylight revealed cars nearly covered by 6-foot snowdrifts and thousands of houses, some adorned in unlit holiday displays, dark from a lack of power. With snow swirling down untouched and impassable streets, forecasters warned that an additional 1 to 2 feet of snow was possible in some areas through early Monday morning amid wind gusts of 40 mph. Police said Sunday evening that there were two "isolated" instances of looting during the storm.

Two people died in their suburban Cheektowaga, New York, homes Friday when emergency crews could not reach them in time to treat their medical conditions. County Executive Mark Poloncarz 10 more people died in Erie County during the storm, including six in Buffalo, and warned there may be more dead.

"Some were found in cars, some were found on the street in snowbanks," said Poloncarz. "We know there are people who have been stuck in cars for more than 2 days."

Freezing conditions and day-old power outages had Buffalonians scrambling to get to anywhere that had heat amid what Hochul called the longest sustained blizzard conditions ever in the city. But with streets under a thick blanket of white, that wasn't an option for people like Jeremy Manahan, who charged his phone in his parked car after almost 29 hours without electricity.

GOP stumbles with independents contributed to midterm woes

EAGAN, Minn. (AP)—As Republican Tyler Kistner's closing ad aired last month in one of the most competitive congressional districts in the U.S., Vickie Klang felt that something was missing.

The 58-year-old veterinary technician and self-described independent voter watched as the 30-second spot showed grainy black-and-white images of President Joe Biden with two-term Democratic Rep. Angie Craig superimposed alongside him. The narrator ominously described life in America as "dangerous and unaffordable" because of an alliance between the two Democrats.

Absent from the ad, Klang thought, was anything close to a solution beyond electing Kistner.

"You're never telling me what you're going to do for the state or the country," Klang recalled. "That's a huge turnoff."

Klang ultimately backed Craig, contributing to a 5 percentage point win for a Democratic incumbent whom Republicans spent more than $12 million to unseat. From Maine to California, Republicans faced similar unexpected setbacks with the small but crucial slice of voters who don't identify with either major party, according to AP VoteCast, a sweeping national survey of the electorate.

Republican House candidates nationwide won the support of 38% of independent voters in last month's midterm elections, VoteCast showed. That's far short of the 51% that Democrats scored with the same group in 2018 when they swept into power by picking up 41 seats. The GOP's lackluster showing among independents helps explain in part why Republicans flipped just nine seats, securing a threadbare majority that has already raised questions about the party's ability to govern.

Some Republican strategists say the finding is a sign that messages that resonate during party primaries, including searing critiques of Biden, were less effective in the general election campaign because independent voters were searching for more than just the opposition.

"You've got to tell them what you're going to do," said David Winston, a Republican pollster and senior adviser to House Republicans who had been critical of GOP candidates' messaging strategy this year. "Somehow the Republican campaigns managed not to do that. And that's a real serious problem."

In the northern reaches of Minnesota's 2nd congressional district, a swath of lakes and onetime farm country teeming with development near the Twin Cities, more than a dozen independent voters echo Winston's assessment.

Unlike Klang, who grew up in a union Democratic household, Steve Stauff of Shakopee, 20 miles west, was raised in a rural, conservative Republican home. The two share a recent history of voting for Republican and Democratic statewide candidates, as well as for independent candidate for governor Jesse Ventura in 1998.

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)
(THIS IS AD IS PAID FOR NMHC WITH HUD FUNDS)

NMHC IFB 2023-002
BID SUBMISSION DATE & TIME: January 13, 2023, 2:00 p.m.

Vehicle Lease of 3-Pick-up Trucks for the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program

Bid information and packet is available on December 13, 2022, at the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net by clicking on the "Procurement Tab" or at the CDBG-DR website at www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com.

The provisions of the NMHC Procurement regulations, NMIAC 100-60-725 AND 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

Inquiries regarding this bid shall be submitted to Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer via email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net or facsimile at (670)234-9021, on or before December 23, 2022, no later than 10 a.m.

/s/
Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

/s/
Merced "Marcie" M. Tomokane
Chairwoman
NMHC Board of Directors

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)
(THIS IS AD IS PAID FOR NMHC WITH HUD FUNDS)

NMHC RFP 2023-001
BID SUBMISSION DATE & TIME: January 13, 2023, 10:00 a.m.

Architect-Engineer Services for the Construction of New Classroom Buildings for the Northern Marianas College (NMC)

The Request for Proposals and Scope of Work are available on December 13, 2022, at the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net and at www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com by clicking on the "Procurement Tab".

Inquiries regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing or email to Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer at officemanager@nmhcgov.net or submitted by facsimile to (670)234-9021 no later than 9:00 a.m. local time on December 28, 2022.

This procurement is in accordance with the NMHC Procurement Regulations. Proposal procedures shall be in full compliance with NMIAC §§ 100-60-210 (Competitive Sealed Proposal) and 100-60-305 (Architect-Engineer Services) of the NMHC Procurement Regulations. The provisions of the NMHC Procurement regulations, NMIAC 100-60-725 AND 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

Mandatory Pre-proposal Conference will be held at the NMHC Central Office Conference Room, Garapan, Saipan, on December 28, 2022, 10 a.m. local time. Failure to attend the Mandatory Pre-proposal conference will be considered a non-responsive offeror.

For more information, contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer, at (670)234- 6866/9447 or email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net during regular business hours, 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

/s/
Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

/s/
Merced "Marcie" M. Tomokane
Chairwoman
NMHC Board of Directors

ACROSS THE NATION

Biden, first lady thank service members in Christmas calls

WASHINGTON (AP)— President Joe Biden celebrated a quiet Christmas with his family at the White House and spoke with service members stationed around the world.

"They're away from their families to protect us," Biden said in a tweet. "And they have the thanks of a grateful, indebted president."

The White House said Biden and the first lady, Jill, called members of the Army stationed at Panama City, Panama; the Navy aboard the USS The Sullivans in the Arabian Sea; the Marine Corps at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego; the Air Force at Okinawa, Japan; the Space Force in Europe; and the Coast Guard aboard the cutter Bertholf in Alameda, California.

This is Biden's second Christmas as president. On Saturday, Biden and his family joined a Mass on Christmas Eve at the White House and continued their holiday tradition of an Italian dinner.

The president and first lady on Friday also carried on another tradition with their second holiday visit to Children's National Hospital. Biden was the first sitting president to join his wife when they visited hospitalized children and their families before Christmas last year, according to the White House.

Surrounded by Christmas trees and holiday decorations, the first lady read "The Snowy Day" with the president's help holding up the book.

Biden last week encouraged national unity in a recorded address, calling out the nation's political divisions and saying he hoped "this holiday season will drain the poison that has infected our politics and set us against one another."

"So, this Christmas, let's spread a little kindness," he said.

Migrants dropped near VP Harris home on frigid Christmas Eve

WASHINGTON (AP)— Three buses of recent migrant families arrived from Texas near the home of Vice President Kamala Harris in record-setting cold on Christmas Eve.

Texas authorities have not confirmed their involvement, but the bus drop-offs are in line with previous actions by border-state governors calling attention to the Biden administration's immigration policies.

The buses that arrived late Saturday outside the vice president's residence were carrying around 110 to 130 people, according to Tatiana Laborde, managing director of SAMU First Response, a relief agency working with the city of Washington to serve thousands of migrants who have been dropped off in recent months.

Local organizers had expected the buses to arrive Sunday but found out Saturday that the group would get to Washington early, Laborde said. The people on board included young children.

Some were wearing T-shirts despite temperatures hovering around 15 degrees Fahrenheit (-9 degrees Celsius). It was the coldest Christmas Eve on record for Washington, according to the Washington Post.

Asia

ASIAN BRIEFS

Heavy snow in Japan leaves 17 dead, dozens injured

TOKYO (AP)—Heavy snow in large swaths of Japan has killed 17 and injured more than 90 people and left hundreds of homes without power, disaster management officials said Monday.

Powerful winter fronts have dumped heavy snow in northern regions since last week, stranding hundreds of vehicles on highways, delaying delivery services and causing 11 deaths by Saturday. More snowfall over the Christmas weekend brought the number of dead to 17 and injured to 93 by Monday morning, according to the Fire and Disaster Management Agency. Many of them had fallen while removing snow from the roofs or were buried underneath thick piles of snow sliding off rooftops.

Municipal offices in the snow-hit regions urged residents to use caution during snow removal activity and not to work alone.

The disaster management agency said a woman in her 70s was found dead buried underneath a thick pile of rooftop snow that suddenly fell on her in Yamagata prefecture's Nagai City, about 300 kilometers (180 miles) north of Tokyo, where snow piled up higher than 80 centimeters (2.6 feet) Saturday.

In Niigata, known for rice growing, some makers of mochi, or sticky rice cakes that are staple for New Year's celebration meals, said there have been delivery delays and their mochi may not reach their customers in time.

Many parts of northeastern Japan reported three times their average snowfall for the season.

Heavy snow knocked down an electric power transmission tower in Japan's northernmost main island, leaving about 20,000 homes without power on Christmas morning, though electricity was restored in most areas later that day, according to the economy and industry ministry.

China sends 71 warplanes, 7 ships toward Taiwan in 24 hours

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—China's military sent 71 planes and seven ships toward Taiwan in a 24-hour display of force directed at the island, Taiwan's defense ministry said Monday, after China expressed anger at Taiwan-related provisions i n a U.S. annual defense spending bill passed on Saturday.

China's military harassment of self-ruled Taiwan, which it claims is its own territory, has intensified in recent years, and the Communist Party's People's Liberation Army has sent planes or ships toward the island on a near-daily basis.

Between 6 a.m. Sunday and 6 a.m. Monday, 47 of the Chinese planes crossed the median of the Taiwan Strait, an unofficial boundary once tacitly accepted by both sides, according to Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense.

Among the planes China sent towards Taiwan were 18 J-16 fighter jets, 11 J-1 fighters, 6 Su-30 fighters and drones.

Taiwan said it monitored the Chinese moves through its land-based missile systems, as well as on its own navy vessels.

"This is a firm response to the current US-Taiwan escalation and provocation," said Shi Yi, the spokesman for the PLA's Eastern Theater Command, in a statement on Sunday night. It announced that the PLA was holding joint combat patrols and joint strike drills in the waters around Taiwan.

Shi was referring to the U.S. defense spending bill, which calls China a strategic challenge. With regard to the Indo-Pacific region, the legislation authorizes increased security cooperation with Taiwan and requires expanded cooperation with India on emerging defense technologies, readiness and logistics.

China's military has often used large military exercises as a demonstration of force in response to U.S. government actions in support of Taiwan. It conducted large live-fire military exercises in August in response to U.S. House speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan. Beijing views visits from foreign governments to the island as de facto recognition of the island as independent and a challenge to China's claim of sovereignty.

58 weak Rohingya land on Indonesian beach after weeks at sea

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia (AP)—Dozens of hungry and weak Rohingya Muslims were found on a beach in Indonesia's northernmost province of Aceh on Sunday after weeks at sea, officials said.

The group of 58 men arrived on Indrapatra beach at Ladong, a fishing village in Aceh Besar district, early Sunday, said local police chief Rolly Yuiza Away. Villagers who saw the group of ethnic Rohingya on a rickety wooden boat helped them to land and then reported their arrival to authorities, he said.

"They look very weak from hunger and dehydration. Some of them are sick after a long and severe voyage at sea," said Away, adding that the men received food and water from villagers and others as they waited for further instructions from immigration and local officials in Aceh.

At least three of the men were rushed to a health clinic for medical care, and others are also receiving various medical treatments, Away said.

The United Nations and other groups on Friday urged countries in South Asia to rescue as many as 190 people believed to be Rohingya refugees aboard a small boat that has been adrift for several weeks in the Andaman Sea.

"Reports indicate those onboard have now remained at sea for a month in dire conditions with insufficient food or water, without any efforts by States in the region to help save human lives," the U.N. refugee agency, UNHCR, said in a statement. "Many are women and children, with reports of up to 20 people dying on the unseaworthy vessel during the journey."

US warns of possible attack in Islamabad amid security fears

ISLAMABAD (AP)—The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad on Sunday warned its staff of a possible attack on Americans at a top hotel in Pakistan's capital as the city was already on high alert following a suicide bombing earlier in the week.

The U.S. government is aware of information that "unknown individuals are possibly plotting to attack Americans at the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad sometime during the holidays," the embassy said in a security alert. The advisory banned its American personnel from visiting the popular hotel over the holidays.

The U.S. mission also urged all personnel to refrain from non-essential travel in Islamabad during the holiday season.

The embassy directive came two days after a suicide bombing in a residential area of the capital killed a police officer and wounded ten others. The explosion happened when police stopped a taxi for inspection during a patrol. According to the police, a rear seat passenger detonated explosives he was carrying, blowing up the vehicle.

Militants with the Pakistani Taliban, who are separate from but allied with Afghanistan's rulers, later claimed the attack.

Islamabad's administration has since put the city on high alert, banning public gatherings and processions, even as campaigns are ongoing for upcoming local elections. Police have stepped up patrols and established snap checkpoints to inspect vehicles across the city.

World

AS ATTACKS GO ON

Putin claims Moscow is ready for Ukraine talks

AP

Ukrainian servicemen from 127 brigade prepare a telescopic tower with a remote camera installed on a Soviet car "Volga" that was recast to observe and correct fire on the front line near Kharkiv, Ukraine, Sunday, Dec. 25, 2022.

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—President Vladimir Putin claimed that Russia is ready for talks to end the war in Ukraine even as the country faced more attacks from Moscow—a clear sign that peace wasn't imminent.

Putin said in a state television interview, excerpts of which were released on Sunday afternoon that Russia is "prepared to negotiate some acceptable outcomes with all the participants of this process."

He said that "it's not us who refuse talks, it's them"—something the Kremlin has repeatedly stated in recent months as its 10-month old invasion kept losing momentum.

Putin also repeated that Moscow has "no other choice" and said he believed the Kremlin was "acting in the right direction."

"We're defending our national interests, the interests of our citizens, our people," he said.

Putin's remarks come as attacks on Ukraine continue. A country-wide air raid alert was announced twice on Sunday alone, and three missiles in the afternoon hit the city of Kramatorsk in the partially occupied Donetsk region, local officials reported.

The missiles hit an industrial area of the city, and there weren't any casualties, according to the Ukrainian governor of Donetsk, Pavlo Kyrylenko. Kyrylenko said that the city of Avdiivka was also attacked on Sunday with six rounds of shelling, and a woman was wounded there.

Elsewhere in the front-line region, around the city of Bakhmut, where fierce battles have been underway in recent weeks, the Russian forces were struggling to keep up the pace of their offensive, a U.S.-based think tank reported this weekend.

"Russian forces' rate of advance in the Bakhmut area has likely slowed in recent days, although it is too early to assess whether the Russian offensive to capture Bakhmut has culminated," the Institute for the Study of War wrote in its recent update.

The think tank cited Russian military bloggers, who it said have recently acknowledged "that Ukrainian forces in the Bakhmut area have managed to slightly slow down the pace of the Russian advance around Bakhmut and its surrounding settlements."

Sources on Ukrainian social media "previously claimed that Ukrainian forces completely pushed Russian forces out of the eastern outskirts of Bakhmut" around Dec. 21, the report added.

Netanyahu rebukes ally for anti-LGBTQ comments

JERUSALEM (AP)—Designated Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu issued a rare rebuke of his new coalition allies on Sunday for saying they would advance laws allowing discrimination against LGBTQ people, pledging there would be no harm to their rights by his upcoming government.

Netanyahu is set to form the most ultranationalist and religious government in Israel's history between his Likud movement and several openly anti-LGBTQ parties. This has raised fears among Israel's LGBTQ community that the new government, expected to take office in the coming week, will roll back gains they have made in recent years.

Orit Struck, a Religious Zionist member of the Knesset, Israel's parliament, said her party seeks a change to the country's anti-discrimination law that would include permitting people to avoid acts that go against their religious beliefs — including discriminating against LGBTQ people in hospitals.

Struck said in an interview on Sunday with Kan public radio that "so long as there are enough other doctors to provide care," religious healthcare providers should be able refuse to treat LGBTQ patients.

Simcha Rotman, another member of the party, said that private business owners, such as hotel operators, should be allowed to refuse service to LGBTQ "if it harms their religious feelings."

Netanyahu issued a pair of statements repudiating Struck's comments.

Netanyahu said that Struck's remarks "are unacceptable to me and to members of Likud," and that the coalition agreement "does not allow discrimination against LGBTQ or harming their right to receive services like all other Israeli citizens."

As the controversy continued to rage, he later issued a second videotaped statement saying he "completely rejects" Struck's remarks.

"In the country that I will lead, there will be no situation where a person, whether he is LGBT, Arab or ultra-Orthodox or any other person, will enter a hotel and not receive service, enter a doctor and not receive service," he said.

Overdrive

US Postal Service delivery trucks are going electric

By ARI NATTER
BLOOMBERG NEWS

The US Postal Service will spend nearly $10 billion for new electric vehicles in a push to make its mail delivery fleet more environmentally friendly.

The agency will purchase 66,000 electric vehicles for its mail delivery fleet by 2028, according to a statement Tuesday. That represents about a quarter of USPS's current level, and the postal service will continue exploring the potential to make its entire fleet electric.

The agency will buy 60,000 vehicles from defense contractor Oshkosh Corp., of which some 45,000 will be electric, according to the Washington Post, which earlier reported on the development. Shares of Oshkosh rose as much as 2.7% Tuesday, the most in five weeks.

The Postal Service also plans to buy 21,000 commercial electric vehicles from other automakers, according to the statement.

The development marks a dramatic turnaround from the Postal Service's prior announcement for plans to replace its fleet of aging red-white-and blue delivery vans with mostly gasoline powered models. That was a blow to President Joe Biden's climate plans and a bid by electric vehicle maker Workhorse Group Inc.

About $3 billion of the planned investment will come from Inflation Reduction Act funds.

Rule delay makes large EV tax credit possible early next year

WASHINGTON (AP)— People who want to buy an electric vehicle could get a bigger-than-expected tax credit come Jan. 1 because of a delay by the Treasury Department in drawing up rules for the tax breaks.

The department said late Monday it won't finish the rules that govern where battery minerals and parts have to be sourced until sometime in March.

As a result, it appears that buyers of EVs assembled in North America with batteries made in the U.S., Canada or Mexico will be eligible for a full $7,500 tax credit under the Inflation Reduction Act. The act calls for the batteries' minerals and parts to also come from North America or a country with a free-trade agreement with the U.S. in order to get the full tax break, but that provision has been temporarily put on hold.

The auto industry is watching the situation closely, but it could cause a rush to dealers because most, if not all EVs aren't expected to qualify for the full credit when the rules are all in place.

Experts say most automakers won't be able to comply with requirements that the battery components come from North America or a country with a U.S. free-trade agreement. For instance, General Motors already has said that it expects its EVs to get only half the tax credit, or $3,750, until at least 2025.

So people who buy early next year before the rules are announced could pocket an extra $3,750.

IN CELEBRATION OF HIS NEW LIFE

†Thomas O. Sablan

Lovingly known as "Thomas White"

Was born on June 9, 1948, and answered the call of his Creator on Tuesday, December 20, 2022, at the age of 74.

In his new life, he now joins his:

Parents:	†David Salas Sablan
	†Engracia Obuogol Sablan
Siblings:	†Angelica S. Iba
	†Henry O. Sablan
	†Nancy S. Iginoef
	†David O. Sablan
In-Laws:	†Jose Seman Iba
	†Ismael W. Iginoef
	†Gaudencia I. Sablan

Survived by:

Wife:	Sook Lee (Sue) Sablan
Daughters:	Larissa S./Joseph A. Flores and children
	Trina L. Sablan (Susan Renee Sablan)
Siblings:	Benigno O. Sablan & children and family
	Rosita S. Waldron and Son David E. Waldron
In-laws:	Regina M. Sablan & children and family
	Bernadita M. Sablan & children and family

Also survived by 6 great-grandchildren and numerous godchildren, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, friends, and family.

On Wednesday, December 28, 2022, Rosary will be said at the CHCC chapel at 6 am then the remains of our dearly beloved will leave CHCC Morgue at 7 am and will be escorted to San Antonio Church. Responso will follow immediately and then viewing will commence. Mass of Christian Burial will be at 11 am.

Thank you, Kamsamida, Ghilisou, Kme Sulang, Si Yu'us Ma'ase.

The Family

Where did that come from?

Q: I have a 1994 Suburban 1500 four-wheel-drive with 180,000 miles. It runs good and doesn't leak any oil. But this winter when I turn on the heater, it spews a film onto the windshield. The defroster has no effect on it. It seems a bit oily and doesn't wipe off clean. What do you think?

A: It sounds like you have antifreeze coating your windshield. How did it get there? Most likely there is a small leak in the heater core, which is part of the HVAC system. Replacing the heater core can get expensive so try a radiator sealer such as Bar's Leaks, which may plug the hole.

■■■

Q: I went to Costco to have two new tires installed. They told me that I needed to get new lug nuts as the lug nuts on my 2004 Dodge 1500 Ram truck were swollen and that they couldn't get them off and I would have to get new lug nuts. I have never heard of this. I called the dealer and they said it would cost $24 (took off $4) for each lug nut. To replace the lug nuts on my truck would cost me $500, which is ridiculous to me. Do you have any suggestions on how to get new lug nuts at a reasonable price other than from the dealer? You would think the manufacturer would take some responsibility for this product.

A: This was common on some Ford and Dodge vehicles. The original lug nuts are steel with a chrome cap over them. The nuts corrode between the two and swell, making them nearly impossible to remove. I say nearly impossible because there are special sockets that technicians can use to get those nasty nuts off. I suggest replacing them with chrome or stainless steel nuts. Check out your local parts store for availability and find an independent shop to replace the nuts for a lot less money.

■■■

Q: My question is: Does it matter what lane of a three- or four-lane highway I travel in, so I can travel fewer miles. In other words, is the far-left lane shorter, for example.

A: The shortest path between two points is a straight line. To approach that, you must cut corners — literally cut corners — to stay on the inside lane. On a multi-lane highway, that could cause trouble and maybe even get you a ticket. Since most roads have many curves, pick a lane. It will average out.

■■■

Q: I have scratches from my wiper blade on the windshield. Is there a product to remove the scratches?

A: No. None that I am aware of other than cerium oxide. But using it takes lots of time and may create optical irregularities. If the scratches are deep enough to feel with your fingernail, forget it.

■■■

Q: My friend and I have had a discussion regarding gas tanks. I usually like to keep my gas tank mostly full, and he says extra weight causes the mpg to go down a lot. He usually only has his tank a quarter full. Is there some validity to this?

A: Every extra ounce is a factor when it comes to fuel economy. That's why carmakers trim every bit of weight possible. Remember spare tires? Almost extinct. Chrome insignias? Plastic now. But I prefer to fill the tank when I have enough money. Chances are the price of gas may go up and your savings will evaporate.

■■■

Q: I recently began reading your answers to readers' questions. I hope you can clarify one. As I read your response to T.D., Chicago, I concluded you either did not understand the question, or you did not reach the correct conclusion. You stated the husband was correct, but your analysis contradicted that. Essentially, the husband claimed that leaving accessories in the on position was detrimental to the battery during the starting sequence. However, you responded claiming the start sequence cut power to all accessories. Thus, the on position would have no adverse effect on the start sequence. This would prove the wife correct.

A: At my last count, 31.4 readers have me eating humble pie. The original question was: "[My wife] leaves on the radio, heater and other accessories when she turns off the ignition…. I say this is a slight drain on the battery when the vehicle is restarted. She says it does not matter. Who is correct?" I got the answer backward and the wife is, indeed, correct. Thanks to so many alert readers.

MOTORMOUTH

By BOB WEBER
Tribune News Service

Bob Weber is a writer and mechanic who became an ASE-certified Master Automobile Technician in 1976. Weber's work has appeared in professional trade magazines and various consumer publications including Consumer Guide and Consumers Digest. Send questions along with name and town to motormouth.tribune@gmail.com.

Life & Style

‘Avatar’ sequel sails to 2nd week atop the box office

LOS ANGELES (AP)—”Avatar: The Way of Water” sailed to the top of the box office in its second weekend, bringing in what studios estimate Sunday will be a strong $56 million in North America—a sign that the sequel may stay afloat into the new year and approach the massive expectations that met its release.

James Cameron’s digital extravaganza for 20th Century Studios has made $253.7 million domestically in its first 10 days of release, compared to $212.7 million in the same stretch for 2009’s first “Avatar,” which would go on to become the highest-grossing film of all time.

While Cameron’s films like the “Avatar” original and “Titanic” tend to have serious legs at the box office, sequels tend to open big and decline quickly, complicating guesses on where the film will end up. Its second-weekend drop-off from the $134 million it made in its first was not precipitous, given the way blockbusters open.

20TH CENTURY STUDIOS VIA AP

This image released by 20th Century Studios shows Trinity Bliss, as Tuk, in a scene from “Avatar: The Way of Water.”

“This is James Cameron’s first $100 million opener,” said Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for Comscore “For this movie to have opened that big and only dropped 58%, it shows it has staying power.”

Globally, “The Way of Water” is already the third highest-grossing film released in 2022, bringing in $855 million—putting it behind only “Top Gun: Maverick” and “Jurassic World Dominion”—and is a lock to surpass $1 billion.

It’s also clear sailing for the film looking ahead, with more holiday time coming and no comparable competition until February, when Marvel’s “Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania” is released.

Storms across the U.S. could keep people home, however.

“The biggest foe that Avatar is facing at this moment is the weather,” Dergarabedian said.

Universal’s animated Shrek spinoff, “Puss in Boots: The Last Wish,” featuring the voices of Antonio Banderas and Salma Hayek, finished a distant second with $11.35 million in its opening weekend.

Sony’s biopic “Whitney Houston: I Wanna Dance With Somebody” finished third with $5.3 million.

The weekend’s biggest disappointment was “Babylon,” the epic of early Hollywood from “La La Land” director Damian Chazelle starring Brad Pitt and and Margo Robbie. In a nationwide release it brought in just $3.5 million, finishing fourth.

The tepid, $6.5 million opening weekend in October of director David O. Russell’s “Amsterdam,” another film, set in a similar period, that combined prestige, scope, star power and a celebrated auteur, brought industry worries that audiences just weren’t flocking to theaters for such films.

The concerns proved justified, as “Babylon” barely made more than half of the opening of “Amsterdam.”

The coming weeks in theaters, streaming showings and any nominations it may get could help “Babylon” rise above bomb status.

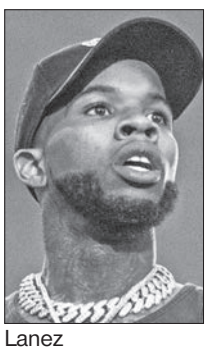
“I would say Babylon is a movie that isn’t about the opening weekend,” Dergarabedian said. “We’ll have to see what it does in the coming weeks then into the new year, particularly if it gets more awards buzz.”

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore, with Wednesday through Sunday in parentheses. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

1. **“Avatar: The Way of Water,”** $56 million.
2. **“Puss in Boots: The Last Wish,”** 11.35 million.
3. **“Whitney Houston: I Wanna Dance with Somebody,”** $5.3 million.
4. **“Babylon,”** $3.5 million.
5. **“Violent Night,”** $3.14 million.
6. **“Black Panther: Wakanda Forever,”** $3 million.
7. **“The Whale,”** $924,000.
8. **“The Menu,”** $617,000.
9. **“The Fabelmans,”** $550,000.
10. **“Strange World,”** $410,000.

LA jury convicts Tory Lanez of shooting Megan Thee Stallion

LOS ANGELES (AP)—In a courtroom that turned chaotic after a trial that seethed with tension, a Los Angeles jury on Friday found rapper Tory Lanez guilty of three felonies in the 2020 shooting of hip-hop star Megan Thee Stallion. The attack left her wounded with bullet fragments in her feet and Lanez’ conviction could send him to prison for more than 20 years.



Lanez

Stallion

Lanez, who was put in handcuffs and led to jail while wearing a powder pink coat with matching pants, showed no visible reaction as the verdict was read.

But moments later, after the jury was escorted out, his father, Sonstar Peterson, leapt up and shouted “This wicked system stands judged before God almighty!” as deputies closed in on him.

Peterson then pointed to the two prosecutors and yelled “You two are evil, wicked people. You know exactly what you did.”

With considerable effort, deputies wrestled him from the courtroom, where he shouted in the hallway.

The jury of seven women and five men deliberated since Thursday before convicting the 30-year-old Canadian rapper, whose legal name is Daystar Peterson, of assault with a semiautomatic firearm, having a loaded, unregistered firearm in a vehicle and discharging a firearm with gross negligence.

Jurors also agreed that there were aggravating factors in the attack, meaning Lanez could face up to 22 years in prison and deportation when he is sentenced on Jan 25.

Three young children, including Lanez’ son, sat in the front row of the courtroom while the verdict was read. A young girl cried and was hugged by Lanez’s stepmother, who was also tearful before she began shouting along with her husband.

Others in the audience shouted agreement, and one woman shouted “we love you Tory” as he was led away.

Supporters of Megan and Lanez gathered outside the courthouse for most of the eight-day trial and crowded the courtroom and the hallway. The scene was tense at times, but remained mostly peaceful until the verdict was read.

Megan Thee Stallion, whose legal name is Megan Pete, testified during the trial that Lanez fired a handgun at the back of her feet and shouted for her to dance as she walked away from an SUV in which they had been riding in the Hollywood Hills in the summer of 2020. She said the two had gotten into a dispute that became especially heated when she started insulting his music.

She needed surgery to remove bullet fragments from her feet.

Roommate has worn out more than his welcome

DEAR ABBY: I’m 55 and own my home. “Randall,” 53, lives with me and pays me rent. We used to be a couple, but COVID caused too much togetherness. He’s in the spare bedroom now. My house is cheaper for him than anywhere else he could go. I was trying to be nice.

The problem is, he talks down to me. I want to have the interior of the house professionally painted, and he insists we should paint it ourselves. “It’ll be fun!” We were testing paint samples on the wall and disagreed over which shade of white to choose. He tells me I should “defer to him” and ends up swearing, and when I ask him to stop, he says I’m overreacting. This is why we are not a couple.

I arranged to have the house painted, and he’s continuing to chastise me for it. It’s MY house! I want to ask him to move. I feel like he’s taking advantage of me. He has more stuff in my house and garage than I do. I’m a minimalist, and all his stuff drives me crazy. How did I get into this situation, how do I get out of it, and how do I avoid it in the future?

FEELING CONTROLLED IN COLORADO

DEAR FEELING CONTROLLED: This man moved in when you were a couple. The circumstances have changed radically. You allowed it to continue because it suited both of you. Because it no longer does, tell him you want him out of there because your relationship “is no longer working.” Then set a date for it to happen. This scenario won’t repeat itself if you set boundaries and assert them when they are encroached upon.

P.S. If your renter is not cooperative, you may have to enlist the services of an attorney to get him out of there, so be prepared.

■■■■

DEAR ABBY: My sophomore year of high school has been filled with family members passing away unexpectedly and beloved pets as well. The cat we raised got sick. He couldn’t breathe and got incredibly skinny. Despite my pleading to take him to the vet, my parents insisted he was already too far gone. My father finally scheduled a vet appointment, but my companion died the same day.

An older cat we had also became very ill. My parents refused to take her to the vet either. Now another one is getting sick and, despite my pleading, they still refuse. They say, “Some cats just get sick like that,” or “Vets can’t always help.”

My parents’ refusal to get them help has me confused, angry and disgusted. I get that vet visits are expensive, but surely a few bills are better than letting a furry companion die. How can I tell my parents how angry I am at them for doing nothing, especially since we don’t know if the last two deaths were preventable?

CAT LOVER IN KANSAS

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR CAT LOVER: Because of advances in medicine, veterinary expenses are higher than they’ve ever been. This is the reason that when someone acquires an animal, it is so important they buy health insurance for their new family member. Your parents’ reluctance to take the cats to a vet may be rooted in the fact that they are unable to pay for it. Please accept my sympathy for the losses you have experienced recently.

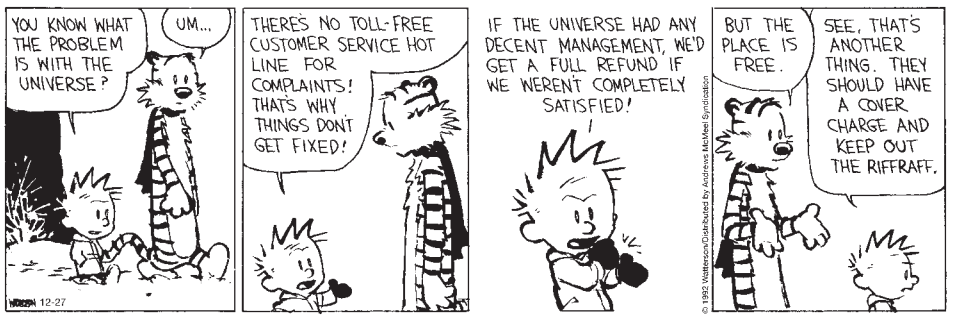
■■■■

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in “The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It.” To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

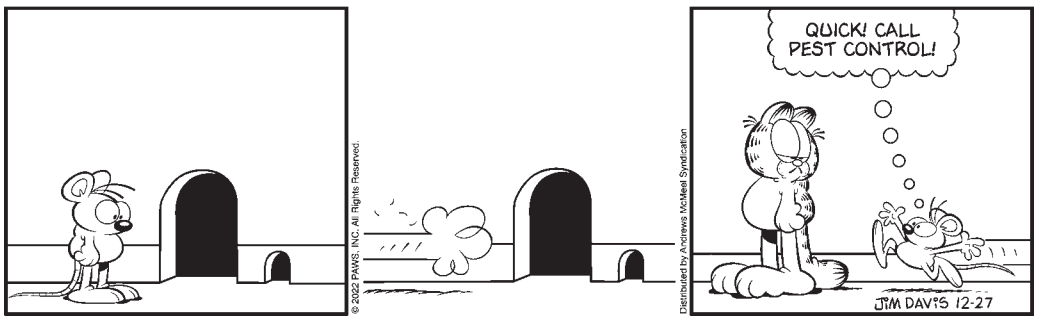
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


YOU KNOW WHAT THE PROBLEM IS WITH THE UNIVERSE?
UM...
THERE'S NO TOLL-FREE CUSTOMER SERVICE HOT LINE FOR COMPLAINTS! THAT'S WHY THINGS DON'T GET FIXED!
IF THE UNIVERSE HAD ANY DECENT MANAGEMENT, WE'D GET A FULL REFUND IF WE WEREN'T COMPLETELY SATISFIED!
BUT THE PLACE IS FREE.
SEE, THAT'S ANOTHER THING. THEY SHOULD HAVE A COVER CHARGE AND KEEP OUT THE RIFFRAFF.
© 1992 Watterson/Dist.by Andrews McMeel Syndication
12-27

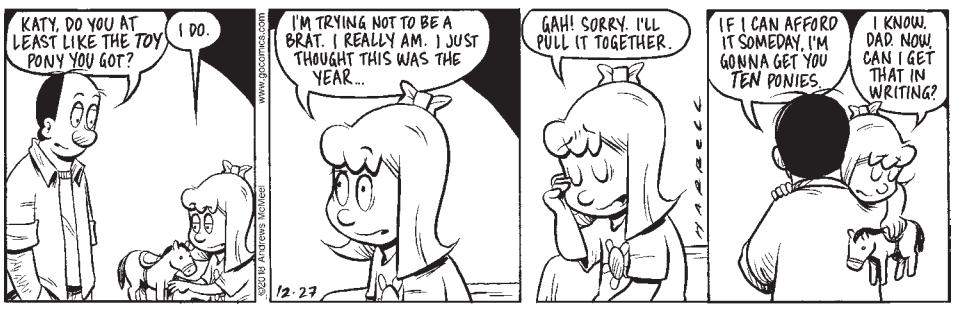
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


KATY, DO YOU AT LEAST LIKE THE TOY PONY YOU GOT?
I DO.
I'M TRYING NOT TO BE A BRAT. I REALLY AM. I JUST THOUGHT THIS WAS THE YEAR...
GAH! SORRY. I'LL PULL IT TOGETHER.
IF I CAN AFFORD IT SOMEDAY, I'M GONNA GET YOU TEN PONIES.
I KNOW, DAD. NOW, CAN I GET THAT IN WRITING?
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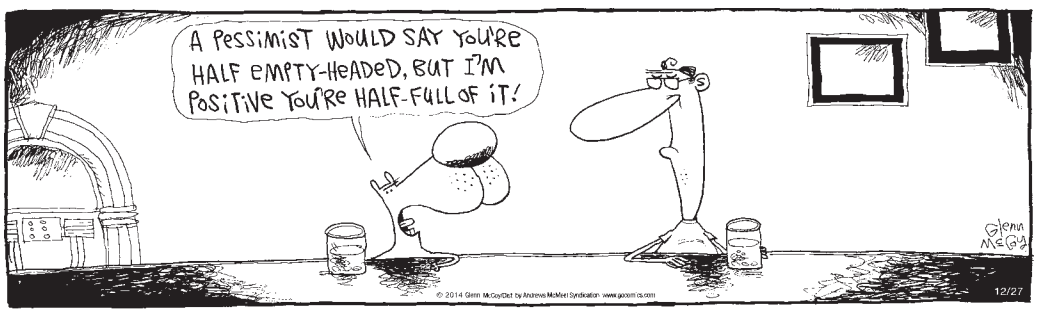
12-27

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


A PESSIMIST WOULD SAY YOU'RE HALF EMPTY-HEADED, BUT I'M POSITIVE YOU'RE HALF-FULL OF IT!
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12/27

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Exerciser's target
5 Gilbert and Sullivan princess
8 Body lotion ingredient
12 Ceremony
13 Fanatic
14 Without
15 Eve's grandson
16 Syria's capital
18 Vandalized
20 1980s Attorney General
21 Sly one
22 Vinyl records
23 Fathered
26 Fairy tale maidens
30 NPR's Shapiro
31 Eggy quaff
32 King, in Cannes
33 Moistens
36 Representative
38 Chopping tool
39 Bikini top
40 Maxim
43 Blocking, as a river
47 Courtier of ancient Syracuse
49 Fuzzy image
50 Historic Scott
51 Online chats, briefly
52 "Money — object"
53 Antitoxins
54 Hallowween greeting
55 To-do list item

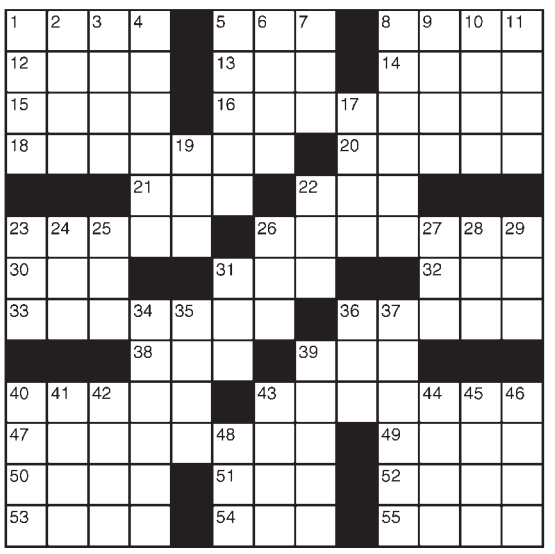
DOWN

1 Wilma's hubby
2 Director Wertmuller
3 Molecule part
4 "Take care"
5 Alphabetized list
6 Group of two
7 $ dispenser
8 Size up
9 Valentine border
10 Burden
11 Being, to Brutus
17 Clock radio toggle
19 Pantheon member
22 Trail the pack
23 Feeling down
24 A Gershwin brother
25 Crater part
26 Two, in Acapulco
27 Before
28 Horror star Chaney
29 Command to Fido
31 Compass dir.
34 Asian temple
35 Corp. bigwig
36 Oft-tattooed extremity
37 Chess ploy
39 Low-voiced singer
40 Totals
41 Challenge
42 From the U.S.
43 Audition CD
44 "Casablanca" role
45 "Sister Act" sisters
46 Understand, slangily
48 Freedom, for short

Solution time: 26 mins.

S	O	T	■	L	O	F	T	■	M	I	S	T
F	B	I	■	I	G	O	R	■	A	K	I	N
P	I	N	E	T	R	E	E	■	V	E	S	T
D	E	A	R	M	E	■	E	W	E	■	■	■
■	■	■	A	U	S	■	S	A	N	D	A	L
C	O	L	T	S	■	R	A	D	■	A	P	P
O	H	I	O	■	T	O	P	■	G	R	O	G
S	H	O	■	F	R	Y	■	L	H	A	S	A
T	I	N	G	L	E	■	B	I	O	■	■	■
■	■	■	A	Y	E	■	O	N	S	I	T	E
S	E	L	F	■	S	H	O	E	T	R	E	E
P	I	A	F	■	I	O	T	A	■	I	T	O
A	N	T	E	■	T	T	Y	L	■	S	E	C

Last Friday's Answer 12/27



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Hayley Williams, 34; Masi Oka, 48; Gerard Depardieu, 74; John Amos, 83.

Happy Birthday: Pump up your enthusiasm, be the one to lead the way and step outside your comfort zone. It's time to explore possibilities and find out what else life has to offer. Size up what's working for you, and initiate changes that accommodate your dreams, hopes and wishes moving forward. Self-improvement, personal growth and romance are encouraged. Your numbers are 3, 9, 15, 24, 31, 46, 48.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Resolve unfinished issues before it's too late. Heading into next year with an open agenda will liberate and encourage you to make better work, money and health decisions. Simplicity and moderation will support your effort to look and feel your best. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Pick a path. You've got more going for you than you realize, so call the shots instead of sitting back and letting someone else take over. If you want things done your way, do them yourself. Change begins with you. Make your intentions clear. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Stay cool, regardless of what others do or say. Someone will try to rile you with rumors, manipulation or blackmail. Arm yourself with facts and refuse to lose your temper, and you'll outmaneuver anyone who wants to play games with you. ✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Let your brilliance lead the way; you'll find solutions that others will honor. A change of pace and a helping hand will buy favors and encourage you to broaden your horizons next year. A partnership will flourish if you maintain financial equality. ✪✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Think before you act. You may desire change, but prematurely forcing issues will leave you vulnerable. Bide your time, listen, observe and calculate the best way to expand your interests without interference. Emotional spending won't ease stress or buy favors, but intelligence might. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Emotional matters will sidetrack you. Reverse negativity by embracing new beginnings and discovering pastimes that excite you. Challenge yourself and participate in festivities happening in your community. A positive encounter will encourage you to try something new. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Get moving. You'll accomplish what you set out to do if you are open to suggestions and ready to give your all. Traveling, spending time with family and considering what changes you want to make next year will provide you with hope. ✪✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Touch base with old friends, attend a reunion or spend time with someone you love. Leave nothing to chance, and you'll avoid something that doesn't work for you. Keep your life simple and responsibilities doable. ✪✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Be careful what you wish for; mixed messages will leave you unsure about what to do next. Don't let anger take over, leaving you at a loss to fulfill your promises. Preparation and planning are necessary if you intend to succeed. ✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Share your ideas with someone you look to for support, and the suggestions offered will be worth considering. A financial gain is apparent if you are creative with your cash and adopt a minimalist lifestyle. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Pump up the energy and make a point to take care of unfinished business before someone complains or criticizes you. Your discipline will kick in and what you accomplish will calm a stressful situation. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* An emotional situation will surface if you attend festive functions. Remain calm and don't say something you'll regret. Regardless of what's happening around you, getting along will show your ability to those considering you for something unique. Romance is on the rise. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are proactive, compassionate and flexible. You are generous and original.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	1	8		2	4	7		
				3				9
5								8
2			4		6			
8	3						6	1
			3		2			4
9								6
3				9				
		1	5	7		9	3	

Difficulty Level ★★ 12/27

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Friday's Answer

5	3	4	9	2	7	8	6	1
1	2	9	6	3	8	5	4	7
8	7	6	1	5	4	9	3	2
4	5	2	8	1	6	3	7	9
7	1	8	3	4	9	2	5	6
6	9	3	2	7	5	1	8	4
2	6	5	7	8	1	4	9	3
9	4	1	5	6	3	7	2	8
3	8	7	4	9	2	6	1	5

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 12/23

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

FUN IN ALBERTA **Solution: 5 letters**

A	V	M	I	N	N	E	W	A	N	K	A	C	S	E
T	T	I	C	A	N	M	O	R	E	P	A	R	K	V
A	N	H	L	I	F	B	R	E	W	E	R	Y	I	A
Q	A	O	A	L	K	F	T	I	D	H	A	S	I	C
U	L	R	M	B	A	R	N	C	P	N	C	T	N	L
A	O	U	Y	R	A	G	L	A	C	M	A	A	G	I
M	D	O	S	V	I	S	E	L	B	Ⓔ	A	L	E	M
A	N	T	E	C	A	A	C	G	Ⓚ	A	O	C	S	B
R	O	L	A	D	E	L	F	Ⓐ	G	D	E	L	I	I
I	G	N	O	R	M	N	Ⓛ	N	G	P	K	E	U	N
N	O	C	U	O	S	O	E	E	R	T	I	A	O	G
E	K	T	O	W	Y	S	N	R	Y	A	H	R	L	K
S	A	S	I	L	I	A	R	T	Y	B	O	A	T	S
N	E	M	J	A	S	P	E	R	O	C	K	I	E	S
E	N	I	C	I	D	E	M	O	U	N	T	A	I	N

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Activity, Bake, Blizzard, Boots, Camp, Chimney, Cold, Cool, Deep, Draft, Earmuffs, Eggnog, Fireplace, Frigid, Frosty, Games, Gingerbread, Hats, Holiday, Iceberg, Ice Fishing, Ice Hockey, Ice Skating, Kids, Lake, Lights, Melt, Mittens, Shovel, Skiing, Sled, Snowballs, Snowboarding, Snowing, Snowman, Snowstorms, Snowsuit, Toboggan, Tours, Warm

Last Friday's Answer: Pyramid

The NEW **Volume 70** can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

Jokic, Nuggets outlast Suns 128-125 in OT; Booker sidelined

DENVER (AP)—Nikola Jokic had another monster triple-double, Aaron Gordon threw down a pivotal dunk that stood up after a review in overtime and the Denver Nuggets rallied for a 128-125 victory over the Phoenix Suns on Sunday night.

Jokic had 41 points, 15 rebounds and 15 assists for his 83rd career triple-double. The two-time reigning NBA MVP had a 40-point, 27-rebound, 10-assist outing a week ago.

Phoenix star Devin Booker lasted only 4:20 in his return from a groin injury, scoring two points after getting 58 against New Orleans in his previous start.

Jamal Murray tied it in regulation for Denver on a dunk with 10.7 seconds left. But it was Gordon's OT dunk that propelled the Nuggets to the victory. At first, he was called for an offensive foul, but a review determined that Landry Shamet was moving, awarding Gordon the basket and a free throw.

Phoenix had a chance to tie it in the closing seconds of OT, only to throw away a pass.

The Suns, who led by 12 in the third quarter, set up for a winning play in regulation but Mikal Bridges was called for an offensive foul after accidentally running into a Denver player. Bridges atoned by blocking Murray's shot just before the buzzer.

The Nuggets improved to 2-6 in games held on Christmas. The other win was in 1994 against Seattle.

Shamet came off the bench to score 31 points—matching his career high—on a night the Suns lost Booker again to the groin injury. Booker was just returning to the court after missing the last three games because of groin soreness.

AP

Denver Nuggets center Nikola Jokic, back, shoots over Phoenix Suns forward Mikal Bridges in the first half of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, Dec. 25, 2022, in Denver.

Deandre Ayton added 22 points and 16 rebounds as Phoenix had six players in double figures. Chris Paul had 17 point and 16 assists, but missed five free throws.

Gordon finished with 28 points and Murray 26.

The Nuggets led by 15 points early in the game. Shamet scored 15 points in the second quarter to help Phoenix work its way back into the game.

Gordon wound up 11 of 18 from the field and Jokic 16 of 25. Both extended their streaks to 23 games of shooting .500 or better from the field, which broke the franchise record set by Nene in 2010-11.

This was the first of four meetings between the two teams. The Suns went 2-1 against Denver last season.

Mavericks 124, Lakers 115

In Dallas, Luka Doncic scored 32 points, Tim Hardaway Jr. had 16 of his 26 points in a huge third quarter for Dallas and the Mavericks beat Los Angeles.

Christian Wood added 30 points and tied a career high with seven assists as the Mavericks finished off a celebration of Dirk Nowitzki's statue unveiling by winning just the second Christmas Day home game in franchise history.

Dallas took its first lead during a 51-point third quarter, the highest-scoring quarter on Christmas in NBA history and a league-best this season. Golden State and Orlando have each had a 50-point quarter.

LeBron James scored 38 points, one shy of his season high, and the Lakers led by 12 early in the third before the Mavericks took over.

Donci also had nine assists.

Celtics 139, Bucks 118

In Boston, Jayson Tatum scored 20 of his 41 points in the third quarter, and Jaylen Brown knocked down his shots—and knocked down Giannis Antetokounmpo—in the fourth quarter to help Boston beat Milwaukee in a matchup of the top two teams in the NBA.

Brown scored 13 of his 29 points in the fourth, and Antetokounmpo lost his temper after a hard pick sent him to the floor and retaliated by shoving the Boston All-Star. Antetokounmpo, who fell hard on his hand Friday night but was cleared to start, was given a technical foul and went to the bench; the teams played the last 3:41 without further incident.

Antetokounmpo had 27 points and had nine rebounds for Milwaukee, and Jrue Holiday had 23 points.

76ers 119, Knicks 112

In New York, Joel Embiid scored 35 points, James Harden had 29 points and 13 assists and Philadelphia blew by New York in the final quarter, extending its winning streak to eight games,

Georges Niang hit four 3-pointers in Philadelphia's fourth-quarter surge and finished with 16 points. De'Anthony Melton added 15 as the 76ers got off to a good start on a four-game trip after sweeping a seven-game homestand.

The Sixers never led through three quarters, then outscored the Knicks 24-9 to open the fourth, turning a one-point deficit into a 116-102 lead.

Julius Randle scored 35 points for New York, and Jalen Brunson had 23 points and 11 assists. The Knicks have lost three straight following an eight-game winning streak.

Warriors 123, Grizzlies 109

In San Francisco, Jordan Poole scored 32 points—highlighted by emphatic one-handed slam off a pass from Draymond Green in the third—to outduel Ja Morant before being ejected, and the Warriors beat Memphis in a rematch of the Western Conference semifinals won in five games by Golden State.

Morant scored 36 points while debuting his first Nike signature "Ja 1" shoe for the Grizzlies' first Christmas Day game.

Klay Thompson had 24 points and nine rebounds for Golden State. The Warriors were without Stephen Curry for the fifth straight game because of a shoulder injury.

Facing a Grizzlies team that is healthy at last and using its regular lineup, tensions were high just like that playoff round seven months ago. Poole was tossed for the first time in his career with 9:20 left and Golden State had six technicals.

Mavs unveil Nowitzki statue before Christmas game vs. Lakers

DALLAS (AP)—Dirk Nowitzki stood with his son Max, both ready to push the lever that would unveil the statue of the retired Dallas Mavericks star outside the team's arena.

It already had been revealed that the statue depicted Nowitzki's signature one-legged fadeaway jumper. Not that there ever was any question.

"That jump shot, just going up to the sky, creating all type of rain," said Los Angeles Lakers coach Darvin Ham, whose team lost to the Mavericks 124-115 in the Christmas Day game that followed the Nowitzki ceremony Sunday.

Nowitzki has a street named after him not far from American Airlines Center, where his jersey is in the rafters. And now there's a nearly 24-foot statue on the plaza south of the arena, unveiled on a chilly but sunny morning.

"It was emotional," said Nowitzki, the only NBA player to spend all 21 seasons with the same franchise. "When the thing went up, felt like the sun was just perfect today, just shining right on it."

AP

Dirk Nowitzki's statue is unveiled during the "All Four One" statue ceremony in front of the American Airlines Center in Dallas, Sunday, Dec. 25, 2022.

The biggest of those multiple moments honoring Nowitzki's career came on the 11th anniversary of the only other Christmas home game for the Mavericks.

Nowitzki was the face of the franchise then, opening defense of the club's only NBA title in the lockout-delayed 2011-12 season.

The new face, 23-year-old star guard Luka Doncic, watched the ceremony from just behind Nowitzki with several teammates and coach Jason Kidd.

"I'm just happy for him," said Doncic, who was Nowitzki's teammate his rookie year. "He deserves all those things that are happening to him. The statue looks amazing."

Kidd, Nowitzki's point guard on the 2011 title team, had to throw in at least a couple of barbs, deciding to poke fun at the defense of the NBA's highest-scoring foreign-born player.

"They picked the right move," Kidd told reporters later. "I don't think they were going to use the swipe (on defense) or him passing the ball. You see his stats on passing? He was a ball hog."

Sculptor Omri Amrany has created statues of other retired NBA stars in Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson and Shaquille O'Neal. He worked mostly with Nowitzki mentor Holder Geschwindner, who shaped the 7-foot German's one-legged fadeaway.

Nowitzki's family came from Germany along with Gershwindner, and the 44-year-old couldn't say enough times what it meant to have his mom and dad witness the ceremony.

It came four days after Nowitzki was nominated for the Naismith Memorial Hall of Fame alongside Gregg Popovich, coach of Texas rival San Antonio, retired Spurs guard Tony Parker and Dwyane Wade, who beat Nowitzki in the 2006 NBA Finals with Miami before losing to him with LeBron James in 2011.

Nowitzki's title came the year James and Chris Bosh joined Wade and the Heat, who went on to win the next two championships. Nowitzki stayed through some lean final years in Dallas, mostly because he had what he wanted most.

"I'm so happy I didn't have to do that and it worked out this way," Nowitzki said. "Once we won the championship, I knew I wanted to be here and finish my career here."

Nowitzki is sixth on the career scoring list with 31,560 points and the leader in every other significant offensive category for the Mavericks. He is a consultant for owner Mark Cuban and spends most of his time in Dallas with his wife, Jessica, and three children.

As the three-year statue project dragged on, Nowitzki pondered the theme that would accompany the base. When it came time to decide, he said he got lucky in picking something with 21 letters, matching his 21 seasons with the Mavericks.

"Loyalty never fades away."

Tagovailoa throws 3 picks, Packers defeat Dolphins, 26-20

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. (AP)—Packers cornerback Jaire Alexander knew the secondary needed to start playing better against the Miami Dolphins after defensive backs coach Jerry Gray surprisingly yelled at them at halftime.

"That woke us up for sure," Alexander said. "He doesn't really yell, but he was yelling at us then. And you see the results. He probably needed to yell at us at the beginning of the game."

Gray's motivational effort worked: The Packers intercepted Tua Tagovailoa three times in the fourth quarter to complete their comeback and defeat the Dolphins 26-20 to keep their playoff hopes alive.

The Packers had a season-high four takeaways in the game — three interceptions, one fumble recovery. Alexander caught one of Green Bay's three interceptions early in the fourth.

"That's how it is. You get one pick, more are going to come," said cornerback Rasul Douglas, who caught the game-sealing pick. "Keep catching those, and you keep getting them. I'm just glad we caught them."

Aaron Rodgers threw for 238 yards and a touchdown and was intercepted once, helping the Packers (7-8) to their third straight win. The team is looking to make a playoff push after starting the season 4-8.

AP

Miami Dolphins quarterback Tua Tagovailoa (1) looks to pass during the first half of an NFL football game against the Green Bay Packers, Sunday, Dec. 25, 2022, in Miami Gardens, Fla.

After losing four consecutive games, Miami (8-7) now needs two wins or a win at New England and the New York Jets to lose to Seattle in Week 17 to make the postseason.

"I did not foresee that happening," Dolphins coach Mike McDaniel said of the end result. "I felt strong going into halftime and where our guys were at. I didn't foresee standing up here in this situation. I know the team feels the same way. It's another gut check."

After leading by as many as 10, the Dolphins trailed by six points with a chance to take the lead in the final two minutes, but Tagovailoa threw his third interception in three possessions to end Miami's comeback bid. He threw a pick with about six minutes left that set up a Packers field goal.

Packers kicker Mason Crosby made the go-ahead field goal early in the fourth after back-to-back turnovers by both offenses.

Undrafted Miami rookie Kader Kohou intercepted a pass by Rodgers intended for Allen Lazard, but the Dolphins gave it right back when Alexander intercepted Tagovailoa on the very next play.

Miami's defense held the Packers to six points off turnovers in the second half, and also held Green Bay to two TDs and three field goals in five trips to the red zone.

"It wasn't pretty, certainly," Packers coach Matt LaFleur said. "I think a lot of times, when you kick a bunch of field goals, that's usually just enough to get you beat."

A.J. Dillon led the Packers with 36 yards rushing on 11 carries, and Lazard had 61 yards receiving on five catches.

Tyreek Hill had four catches for Miami to give him 113 for the season, setting a Dolphins' single-season receptions record previously held by Jarvis Landry. Jaylen Waddle added five receptions for 143 yards.

But Miami spoiled those big receiving days with turnovers. Raheem Mostert fumbled in the first half, and Tagovailoa's three interceptions were the most he has thrown all season.

"It's tough," Tagovailoa said. "You get an opportunity to play on Christmas Day against a really good team. I go out there and don't put my best foot forward for our team."

Miami committed to the run game early, rushing for 82 yards against Green Bay after a season-high 188 yards rushing against Buffalo in Week 15.

The Dolphins ran four times for 38 yards on their opening drive and took a 3-0 lead, and Green Bay countered with a field goal to tie it after Keisean Nixon's 93-yard kickoff return set up the Packers at the 9-yard line.

Miami built a 20-13 halftime lead after an 84-yard TD by Waddle and 1-yard TD run by Jeff Wilson.

Dillon's 1-yard touchdown run on Green Bay's first possession of the third quarter tied the game.

Tight end Marcedes Lewis also had a 1-yard TD catch in the first quarter.

Buccaneers 19, Cardinals 16, OT

In Glendale, Ariz., Tom Brady and Tampa Bay maintained control of the NFC South, overcoming a 10-point deficit in the fourth quarter and beating Arizona in overtime.

Ryan Succop hit a 40-yard field goal with 3:41 left in overtime, capping a nine-play, 66-yard drive. Brady wasn't great for much of the night, but came up big on the decisive drive, completing all six of his passes in a vintage display.

The Cardinals got the ball to start overtime but eventually had to punt. Tampa Bay got the big gain it needed when Brady found Russell Gage Jr. for a 23-yard gain.

Arizona (4-11) has lost five straight games, while Tampa Bay snapped a two-game skid. The Bucs (7-8) stayed a game ahead of the Carolina Panthers and New Orleans Saints in the NFC South. Tampa Bay has a crucial home game against Carolina next weekend.

The 45-year-old Brady made his 331st career start at quarterback, while the Cardinals were down to Trace McSorley in his first start.

Rams 51, Broncos 14

In Inglewood, Calif., Baker Mayfield threw two touchdown passes to Tyler Higbee, Cam Akers ran for 118 yards and three more scores and Los Angeles routed Denver for its second victory since mid-October.

Mayfield went 24 of 28 for 230 yards in another standout performance for his second win in three starts with the Rams (5-10), who produced the best game of their dismal season on Christmas.

Rookie Cobie Durant returned his second interception 85 yards for a touchdown with 4:08 left to cap the Rams' first 50-point performance under Sean McVay since their famed 54-51 victory over Kansas City in 2018.

In his Los Angeles debut, Larrell Murchison had 2 1/2 of the Rams' six sacks of Russell Wilson, who passed for 214 yards with three interceptions for Denver (4-11).

RUN

From Page 20

"We broke the most teams ever recorded and capped it officially with 33 teams. That is a record [of] 165 runners. Another record broken was our running club's fastest time, which now belongs to Run Saipan Alpha led by Tania Tan. They ran it in under an hour and 20 minutes. Records are meant to be broken. ACS Torchbearers team broke the record too by running just a minute shy from ours. So proud of both teams' accomplishments. That means the standards are higher for next year for those vying for competition."

"It was an honor to co-direct the race alongside the legendary coach Elias Rangamar. We did our best under the guidance of Robin [Sapong] to ensure we had a safe and great race. All the teams did such an amazing job bringing their most festive holiday spirit as well as cheering everyone on and having fun. That was the priority. An amazing job to the officers of the Department of Public Safety for executing a flawless highway plan. If it were not for them, we wouldn't have been able to pull this off. Thank you to our NMA and Run Saipan volunteers and officers for an amazing job conducting the 41st ACIR. Special thanks to the U.S. Army for leading the way carrying the colors as well as Lao Zhang, Ando Agulto, and Jonathan Sugatan for documenting and telling our story through their craft of photography and videography," said Dela Cruz.

Results of the youth division will be posted in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune*.

Last year, Baby Got Track, led by Dr. Lily Muldoon, beat all three Run Saipan teams in the 40th staging of the Christmas Island Relay.

LAO ZHANG

The Run Saipan Alpha team poses with Run Saipan secretary/treasurer Dr. Ron Snyder, extreme left, Lia Rangamar, Run Saipan's Edward Dela Cruz Jr., second from right, and Northern Marianas Athletics developmental officer Elias Rangamar, extreme right, after Northern Marianas Athletics' 41st Annual Christmas Island Relay last Saturday.

JUHN

From Page 20

me the mental support that I needed while I was studying. I would like to especially thank my coach's wife, if she wasn't here I would've surely failed the test and my swimming career would've ended. We have swimmers preparing for college but I'm not worried because we have her on our side," he said.

Hiroyuki Kimura said he's proud of Tenorio getting into Hosei University, which consistently ranks among the Top 8 universities/colleges in Japan.

"Juhn is entering Hosei University via athlete recommendation. We submitted a lot of materials such as competition participation history, personal best time, practice plan for four years at university, and he had interviews and submitted an essay in November. He passed the entrance examination as an athlete splendidly!"

Honestly, however, Kimura admitted he had doubts whether his ward would be accepted by the university.

"There was some anxiety, but it seems that the fact that he was the captain of the team, that he had many Saipan records, and that he had set good times was a big factor," he said.

VOLLEYBAKERS

From Page 20

Veginners found their footing and put in the work.

The Veginners' Lucy Hong, Esther Zhao, Jenny Xu, Mary Zhu, Iris Chen, Jessica Chen, and Katherine Lim kept the ball alive as they came closer and closer to a tie-breaking third set, but the Volleybakers overpowered them and ended the game with a close deficit of just two points.

Alyssa Velasco, Haram Lee, Angel Calage, and Julie Harrison make up the rest of the Volleybakers.

In other results of the women's division games that night, Saluta's Helpers defeated Veginners in three sets, 25-23 17-25 14-16 and V Fans defeated Saluta's Helpers in two sets, 25-10, 25-8.

Behind the Volleybakers in the standings is GG'z and V Fans with four wins and two losses, Saluta's Helpers with a 2-5 card, and Veginners with no wins and seven losses.

In the men's division games, the Parumpapapums won against the Naughty List 26-24, 26-24; Jingle Boyz defeated Gentlemen's Association 25-16, 25-21; Bradahood trounced Asian Airlines in three close sets 23-25, 25-22, 15-8; and We 9 Kings slipped past Saikyo in three sets, 22-25, 25-15, 15-9.

There is one more regular season game tonight, with the semifinals scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 29, starting at 6pm, and the finals scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 30, at 6pm.

2022 FINA World Championships

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Jinnosuke Suzuki almost dives into the pool on Day 1 of the morning session of the 2022 FINA World Championships in Melbourne, Australia.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Maria Batallones, left, and Shoko Litulumar pose in front of the interview area for medalists.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Isaiah Aleksenko relaxes in his cool down time after his exciting race in the 100m butterfly event.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The CNMI National Swimming Team waits for their events in front of the call room.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Shoko Litulumar smiles after her last individual event, the 50m backstroke.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The CNMI National Swimming Team spent around one hour before their events by doing warm-up exercises like stretching and dry land workouts at the pool deck.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Maria Batallones, left, and Shoko Litulumar pose for the camera from the pool.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Maria Batallones and Shoko Litulumar pose with Japanese top sprinter Yume Jinnno.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Shoko Litulumar, Isaiah Aleksenko, Maria Batallones, and Jinnosuke Suzuki pose at the sub pool following evening training.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The CNMI National Swimming Team explores Melbourne after performing their best in the 2022 FINA World Championships.

Jokic, Nuggets outlast Suns 128-125 in OT; Booker sidelined

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Run Saipan Alpha breaks record

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Run Saipan's Alpha team took home an early Christmas gift after setting an unofficial new record in the Northern Marianas Athletics' 41st Annual Christmas Island Relay last Saturday.

Tania Tan, Keith Ketola, Heimanarii Lai San, Keith Longuski, and Sildrey Veloria took turns running 1-mile increments from Pacific Islands Club to the Last Command Post in Marpi and finished the 13.7-mile course in a breakneck speed of 1:19.52.

Run Saipan president Edward Dela Cruz Jr. said the 2022 Alpha team is a combination of the club's 2021 Alpha and Bravo teams and was on a mission for redemption after the premier running club on the island didn't top the open division race last year.

The team's average split times per mile was 5:46/mile or 3:34/km. Individually, Veloria ran a 5:59/mile; Ketola sprinted a 4:55/mile; Tan ran a 5:45/mile; Longuski ran a 5:30/mile; and Lai San ran a 6:30/mile.

A close second was the Agape Torchbearers 1 with a time of 1:21.34 and third was Agape Torchbearers 2 that clocked in at 1:28.14.

Allen Lou, Jireh Wang, Caleb Cui, Daniel Li, and David Zhao made up the Torchbearers 1 team, while Abraham Zhu, Stephen Chen, Jim Qui, Aaron Wang, Eunice Xu made up the Torchbearers 2 team.

Tania Tan, who was the team captain and Run Saipan board member, said that the course "was really fun. The roads were kind of slippery today because I think it probably rained earlier in the morning or overnight, but I love this race because there's just so many people and it's so close to Christmas, so everyone's back, and it was just a really fun race overall."

Tan, who just arrived on island a couple days before the race said, "I'm still kind of jetlagged, but I wanted to run this and Edward Dela Cruz asked me, so I said 'sure, why not? It'd be fun.'" She said that she will be on Saipan until early January and would gladly join other races while she's here.

When asked if they were leading the whole way, Tan, who ran the second leg of the 13.7-mile long course, said that they were. "Surprisingly, we did lead the whole time, which I was surprised about because I thought Agape [Christian School] would have come closer. But yeah, it was nice to just be leading."

Dela Cruz said the turnout was "amazing" and that "multiple records were broken."

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LAO ZHANG
The Run Saipan Alpha team, from left, Tania Tan, Heimanarii Lai San, Sildrey Veloria, Keith Longuski, and Keith Ketola scorched the competition with a record-breaking time of 1:19.52 in the Northern Marianas Athletics' 41st Annual Christmas Island Relay last Saturday.

Juhn Tenorio to enroll at Hosei University

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Former CNMI national swimmer Juhn Tenorio will be taking his talents to Japan or more specifically to Hosei University.

"I feel very relieved at the moment for passing the test. Everything I worked for my whole life was on the line and it was a different kind of pressure compared to when I'm competing. I hope that my move to Hosei University will motivate all swimmers on the island to seek higher goals. If I can do it, everyone can do it," said the 18-year-old alumnus of Marianas High School.

Based in Tokyo and founded in 1880, Hosei University is one of the more sought-after tertiary institutions in Japan for high school graduates.

Tenorio said he will be majoring in sports health, specifically sports coaching at Hosei University.

"I will be learning coaching at one of the best colleges in Japan and when I graduate I would like to come back to the island and train young swimmers so we can prove that we are filled with talented and hard-working kids."

As for being part of Hosei University's swimming team, Tenorio said he's aspiring to be a regular member.

"Regular members are the only ones that are allowed to swim at major competitions. In order to become one, you have to be one of the best swimmers at Hosei University at your specific event. My goal is to become one within my first year and continue on from there."

Tenorio then thanked his mother, Hiroko, and Tsunami Saipan Swimming Center coach Hiroyuki Kimura and his wife, Yuko, for helping him get into Hosei University.

"I would like to thank my mother first. She gave me the opportunity for this college journey. Words cannot express my appreciation for my mother so I will show her by action. Secondly, I would like to thank my coach and his wife. They've supported me in everything. They gave

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Tenorio

Volleybakers are undefeated in Agape v-ball tourney

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

With the playoffs looming closer, the Volleybakers are heading into the postseason undefeated with six wins after defeating GG'z and Veginners in the continuation of the Agape Christmas Volleyball Tournament last Friday at the Agape Gymnasium.

The starting six led by team captain Alisa Baquilles, Cecile Guevarra, Fatima Monterubio, Michelle Masga, Helen Baker, and Julie Capayas, defeated GG'z in two sets, 25-18, 25-16, and kept their streak alive after beating Veginners in two sets as well, 25-6, 29-27.

While the Volleybakers managed to maneuver the ball over the net with precision in the first set against Veginners for the swift win, the second set was tougher to get over as the

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
From left, Angel Calage, Cecile Guevarra, Julie Capayas, Helen Baker, Michelle Masga, Alisa Baquilles, Haram Lee, Alyssa Velasco, Julie Harrison, Iszel Esteves, and Fatima Monterubio make up the Volleybakers who are undefeated with six wins in the Agape Christmas Volleyball Tournament after defeating two teams last Friday at the Agape Gymnasium.